

B I B L I O T H È Q U E V E R T E

# YOUNG INDIANA JONES and THE METROPOLITAN VIOLIN

Story & Original French Text

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Translation & Lore Adjustments

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# Young Indiana Jones and The Metropolitain Violin

*(Indiana Jones Jr et le Violon du Metropolitain)*

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## Chapter 1

### Coup de théâtre

*Utah, September 1913, a rainy day.*

“Junior, pack your bags. We’re leaving for New York,” Professor Henry Jones said to the young Indiana Jones. Indiana was grooming himself in his bedroom as his father crashed in with the abrupt announcement. Indy still had scabs from vicious mosquito bites gotten on a recent impromptu trip to the Klondike.

The announcement had the effect of a cold shower on Indiana. “What?! But... Dad, it’s the first day of school!” His mind was already racing about the realities of returning to the school environment. The year 1911 was generally without incident, but 1912 and 1913 thus far had taken him away from a great deal of school.

Professor Jones was still in his dressing gown when he casually brushed aside this objection with a wave of his hand. His dad had struggled with parenting since becoming a widower. He would make announcements like this speaking to the air, as if there was someone else in the room.

“I’ve been invited to the inauguration of the south wing of the Metropolitan Museum,” he explained, brandishing a crumpled letter. “Mr. Edwards, the curator, thanks me for my contribution to the museum’s collection of medieval art. I can’t refuse.”

Indy would say he was in a state of disbelief,

but little was beyond his belief these days. His year began with communing with a shark spirit with the Inuits. The fall had two encounters with what he could not explain as anything but supernatural. He had experienced quite an eventful summer, too. He was pretty sure he had seen a ghost in Maine. In Egypt, he had to confront a stone with evil pre-causes and narrowly escaped the bubonic plague. A few weeks later, in Georgia, he rescued Princess Tamar from the clutches of her many enemies. The travel alone was a burden for one young man, but Professor Jones seemed to forget that.

“I’ll take the opportunity to study an illuminated manuscript from the 10th century at the Pierpont Morgan Library,” the professor continued. “A 10th-century manuscript! Do you realize, Junior? I’ve been waiting for years for the chance to decipher it.” And he reread the famous letter for the twentieth time, as if he couldn’t convince himself of this stroke of luck.

“Who is this Pierpont Morgan?” asked Indy, pretending to be interested in his father’s project.

“He’s a shrewd financier,” explained the professor solemnly. “An exceptional man who has used his wealth to preserve some of the greatest treasures of this world. Nothing like those sharks on Wall Street.”

Indy sighed. In Russia, his father criticized the Bolsheviks. In the United States, he attacked capitalists. A matter of latitude.

“But they won’t take it with them to heaven,” the professor continued emphatically. “I predict that



one day not so far away, they will fall victim to a resounding crash and lose everything! Do you hear me? Indy?”

Satisfied with this lyrical outburst, Professor Jones sank into his luxurious armchair, worthy of being in the local museum if not so broken in. For a few minutes, the drumming of raindrops on the windows had intensified.

Three inches from Indy’s nose, his father, more dressed but still disheveled, waved a piece of paper frantically.

In the garden, Indiana barked desperately. He had been left outside all night, and they had even forgotten to serve him breakfast. On top of this it was truly dreadful weather for the poor dog to sleep in.

In short, the day was off to a bad start. Indy wondered if he was living a waking nightmare. It seemed to be. He had heard of dreams about showing up to school naked, your father making you go on a trip on the first day meant a guaranteed awkward return to school on return. Indy’s nighttime dreams were remarkably plain for how wild his life was.

“But... dad,” the young boy insisted softly. “Usually, you don’t want me to accompany you. You only take me if you have no other choice. So, why...?”

“Why? Why?” the professor exclaimed. “Always questions! Always reproaches! I thought you’d be happy, Junior. You always bend over backwards to accompany me...”

Once again, Henry Jones's face revealed he had lost his temper in front of his son. Yet, he had vowed to be patient, to show kindness. But it was no use: in the face of Indy's inquisitive gaze he lost his composure. To assert himself he gathered himself and raised his voice. It had been roughly a year and a half since losing his wife, Anna. She had died March 3rd the previous year. Professor Jones and his son did not talk much about her after her death. When they tried it just lead to more sadness.

Looking above his reading glasses Henry Jones stared at the son who was the greatest mystery to him. He loved his son, but there was simply no history of men showing affection outwardly in his family. What torture, to be so aware of being trapped in your own culture.

There was a comedic short story he had read about two British men that were passengers from different classes on a ship that sank. As the only two survivors they swam to a nearby deserted island. The premise is the two men spend months on the island together never once talking to each other, as they have not been formally introduced. Dr. Jones thought of that story often as he had so much he needed to communicate to his son but could never find the way.

He was a world renowned scholar who could decipher manuscripts a thousand years old, but could never decipher what was going on in his own son's head or how to communicate with it! What irony.

"Well, Junior... um... it's just that... um..." he stammered, and in deep embarrassment the profes-

sor didn't finish his sentence.

Now it was Indy's turn to gaze at him with an inquisitive look.

"Just that... what, Dad?"

Henry Jones lowered his head.

For a few seconds, the only sounds in the room were the clattering of raindrops and Indiana's barking.

Summoning all his fatherly courage, the professor made an unusual confession. "Well, it's just that... I would have liked to be by your side during your adventures in Georgia and elsewhere. We have had enough trips where you come home telling heroic stories while I am talking about the smell of the local library. Like last month... you rescue a Princess, I was studying a dusty manuscript in Armenia..."

He paused, wiping his fogged-up glasses. "You see, Junior, sometimes I wonder if you have more common sense than I do. Yes, um, more common sense. As a historian I spend a great deal of mental energy putting myself in the past. Our recent years have made me think you might have the right idea spending a little more time in the present." Stunned, Indy pinched himself to make sure he wasn't dreaming. Was it really his father addressing him in these terms?

The one who often regarded him with disdain, only interested in him to scold him?

The one who forced him to digest page after page of Latin?

The one who insisted on calling him "Junior,"

a hated nickname?

Was it the same father standing before him?

“But... dad, it’s just that...”

“Just that... what, Junior?”

“Well, um... I’m a bit tired after all these adventures. Egypt, Georgia, I haven’t stopped for a second!”

The professor’s eyes widened.

“But you’re young, for heaven’s sake!” he exclaimed. “Ah, if I were your age, I’d spend my days differently than with my nose buried in dusty old tomes! I... I...”

“What would you do then, dad?” Indy interrupted with a hint of insolence in his voice.

Unable to answer this question, Henry Jones dodged it with a deft maneuver. “Fine, since you don’t want to accompany me, I’ll go to New York alone!” he declaimed theatrically. Then he turned on his heels and went to open the kitchen door for Indiana, who was persistently demanding his breakfast.

## Chapter 2

### The Best of Friends

The morning passed without another word exchanged between father and son. The professor bustled about in his room, scattering shirts and socks on his bed before tossing them into his suitcase haphazardly. Meanwhile, Indy had gone to visit his friend Herman, who had just recovered from a severe case of measles, as described by the doctor himself.

“You know what, Hermie? My dad wants me to accompany him to New York. Right before school starts. Unbelievable, isn’t it?”

Mouth full, as usual, Herman responded with a grunt. “Honestly,” Indy continued, “I just want some peace and quiet. I’ve spent the whole summer traveling the world.”

“Munch... munch... munch,” came Herman’s reply.

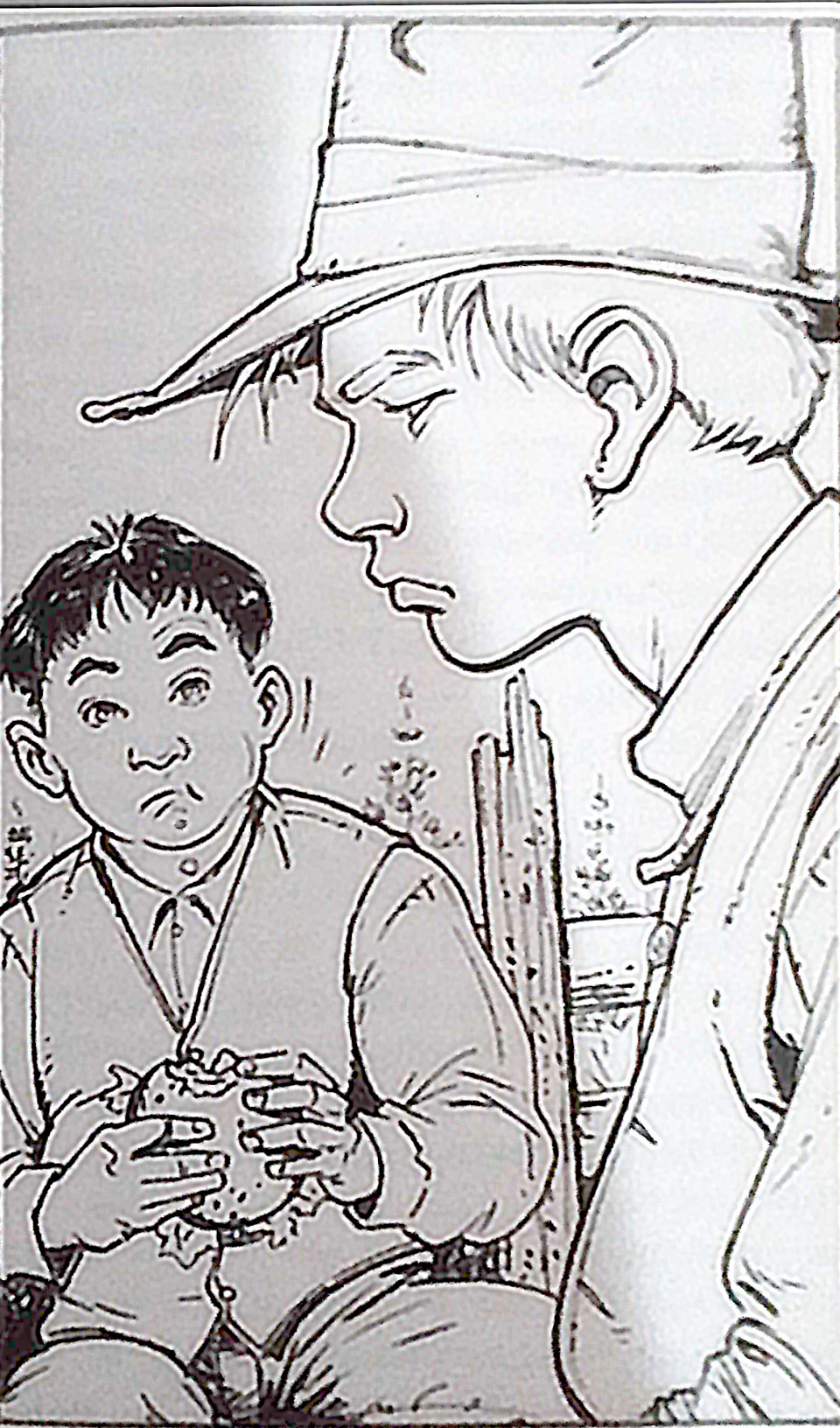
“And then, you don’t know the half of it! Turns out he finally realized I have more common sense than him! It’s astonishing... Yes, really, he’s been acting very strange lately.”

Herman, whom his classmates nicknamed “Chubby,” moved his chubby face up and down. Indy didn’t call him that.

“If you want my opinion... munch... munch... you should go... munch... munch...,” he advised between bites of his chicken, bologna, cold roast beef, and cheese sandwich.

“Why?” asked Indy.





“Don’t you understand?... Your dad made a move towards you. He probably thinks he’s been... munch... munch... too hard on you. So, he wants to make peace. He wants to prove to you how much you... munch... munch... mean to him.”

Indy furrowed his brow. He hadn’t considered the matter from that perspective. Since his wife’s death a year and a half earlier, the professor had alternately regarded his son as a stranger or... an underling. It was either that he didn’t care about him or he harassed him with demands and reproaches, each more absurd than the last. But in recent months, the professor hadn’t spent much time with his son, so perhaps the loneliness was starting to weigh on him.

“You’re probably right,” admitted Indy. “I should go with him. And besides... New York isn’t that far away...relatively.”

Once again, Herman nodded in approval. Suddenly, Indy slapped his right temple vigorously.

“I’ve just had a splendid idea!” he exclaimed. “What do you say to coming with us, Herman?” Bouboule’s eyes widened like an owl’s. The next moment, his head started shaking from left to right and right to left, a clear sign of categorical refusal.

“The city air would do you good,” Indy continued in the same tone. “And you’ve never seen the Statue of Liberty, have you?”

Herman nearly choked. What was this new madness? Had Indy gone mad?

Him, Herman, in New York, the den of all dangers?! Even the slightest spider lurking in a corner of his room would send him fleeing for his life.

“So... New York?!”

“But, Indy... why do you want me to come too?” Herman asked, his voice almost inaudible due to his shyness. “I won’t be of any use to you.”

“Why? Why?” Indy interrupted angrily. “Always questions! Always second guessing! I thought you’d be happy, Hermie. You always bend over backwards to accompany me.”

“Me?! I bend over backwards to accompany him?” Herman thought to himself. But he didn’t say a word. With eyes hidden behind dirty glasses, Herman Mueller stared at this friend - his best friend - who remained the greatest mystery to him.

“Your parents are traveling,” Indy continued. “They won’t even notice you’re gone.”

“But... but what about school?” Herman weakly objected.

Indy raised his arms to the sky. “Listen, Hermie, you know as well as I do that you’ll learn a lot more in New York in a week than in our school for a whole year. So, I won’t ask you this question a third time. Are you coming, yes or no?”

This last sentence sounded more like an ultimatum than a question. As usual, Indy presented Herman with an alternative that wasn’t really an alternative. And as always, without really being able to explain why, Herman was going to accept.

When Indiana Jones decided something, it had been decided. It was an established rule that Herman’s will would definitely break before Indy’s.

“We’re leaving from my place at 5 p.m.,” Indy concluded with confidence. “And don’t be late, Her-

mie.”

When Professor Jones saw his son hastily packing his suitcase, a small tear appeared in the corner of his left eye.

“Junior, you always leave everything to the last minute,” he scolded affectionately. “I’ve told you a hundred times, haven’t I? Punctuality is the mother of all virtues.”

Indy turned to his father. He loved his father more than anything in the world but would never speak what was deep in his heart. The Jones men communicated feelings mainly through actions. Indy also thought about his father’s habit of showing up early to class to ask the best students what they had talked about in the previous session so he would remember. Functional punctuality.

“You know, I’m hopeless. But what can I say, it’s your fault,” Indy mischievously replied. “Yes, indeed, Dad. You’re the one who made me learn how to take care of myself, and I’m going to do so however I please.”

“Really?”

“Of course! Excessive authority leads to rebellion. As Confucius said, ‘When your influence over others is not abused...’”

“Confucius, the famous Chinese philosopher? Well, Junior, I’m impressed. I didn’t know he said that phrase two thousand three hundred years before Napoleon B...”

“I call it the ‘strict-lie cycle’ with my friends” said Indiana, “Strict parents force their kids to lie, making the parents more strict, forcing worse lies.

I'm glad it's a cycle ride we've not ridden."

They both erupted into a laugh, and Indy threw his arm around his father's shoulder.

Their shared wound had not healed. Perhaps it never would. Anna Jones was their shared language. Fortunately for them, they were becoming the best friends in the world.



## Chapter 3

### **“Cover that breast...”**

*New York, 35°C in the shade.*

It was two days later that the travelers from Utah settled into a modest hotel, located not far from the Pierpont Morgan Library, on 36th Street. Thirsty with clothes clinging to their skin, they looked like three survivors from the Sahara.

“Indy and Herman, you’ll take the largest room,” announced Professor Jones with feigned generosity. “It’s well-lit, you can enjoy the last rays of summer.”

The two boys, sweating profusely, exchanged a knowing look. The largest room? Well, they had to try it out.

This display of humor from Professor Jones amused only himself. Indeed, the room in question barely held two single beds! With great difficulty, the hotel owner had squeezed in two cots, between which there was barely a twenty-centimeter gap.

If they both got up to go to the bathroom in the night it would be quite a dance.

Of more immediate risk, they risked suffocating in this cramped space. It was impossible to open the sole window, devoid of curtains, and the “last rays of summer” were bound to scorch the worn-out wallpaper until at least six in the evening.

“Old habits die hard,” whispered Indy in Herman’s ear. “I don’t know if he wants to make peace with me, as you think, but he should start by taking some diplomacy lessons.”

For his part, the professor had indeed assigned himself the smallest room, but also the coolest one, with a real good bed and a real good mattress.

“Thanks for your kindness, Dad,” Indy said ironically.

“Yes... munch... munch... thank you very much, professor,” added Herman, who was munching on his last dry biscuit. All three of them were covered in dust.

After an exhausting train journey they expected to find a taxi upon their arrival. Unfortunately there wasn’t a single one in sight. Exhausted from travel they had to walk from the station, which was several blocks away.

“I can’t wait for Grand Central to be completed!” exclaimed Professor Jones. “This city really needs a proper station.”

Grand Central Terminal was destined to become the main station of the primary city in the United States of America. Suffice it to say, its construction was a massive undertaking.

“Boys, I suggest we each bathe, otherwise clean up, and then we’ll have lunch,” the professor decreed in a military tone.

“Excellent idea,” agreed Herman, whose forced march had left him famished.

“Then, I’ll take you to see an extraordinary exhibition,” Henry Jones continued. “We’re incredibly lucky, you see: the first exhibition of European contemporary art is happening right now at the Armory Show, on 25th Street. What do you say? It’s quite an

opportunity, isn't it?"

Wide-eyed, Herman turned to Indy in the hope that his best friend would come up with a way out of this unexpected attack to their Boy Scout sensibilities.

"On 25th Street?" protested Indy. "But that's eleven blocks away!"

"Well, Junior, you're young! And besides... the fresh city air will do you good!"

Herman muttered a timid "gulp," but preferred not to contradict his friend's father. Moreover, the professor didn't seem to have included him in his plans. So, all Herman had to do was fade into the background... to escape the museum ordeal. Or so the young boy had imagined. Quite wrongly, it must be said.

Three hours later, he was subjected to another ordeal.

"You see, Herman," commented Professor Jones in a scholarly tone, "the Armory Show, in front of which we find ourselves, is a former barracks. That of the 69th regiment, if my memory serves me correctly..."

"Fascinating!" gasped Herman, panting. After a grueling walk of several kilometers, without water or soda, a lesson in architecture coupled with an art history class. Indy was absolutely right. In a week in New York he would learn more than in a whole year at school! Would he come out of it alive? That was far from certain. Some of the smells alone felt like they could kill.

After the professor finished his historical

notes the three visitors entered the Armory Show and began to contemplate each of the artworks presented. But it quickly became apparent that Henry Jones would be disappointed. He eyed a sculpture suspiciously, which bore a striking resemblance to... an iron. Then, he grunted disdainfully upon seeing a painting consisting of square patches of color, all the same size.

And what astonishment he felt before the portrait of a woman shaped like a cube! No matter how he twisted and turned, this woman resembled a cube... Strange...

But it was at the sight of a painting, "Nude Descending a Staircase," a work signed by a certain Marcel Duchamp, that the learned scholar changed completely. Initially intrigued, then suddenly critical, he turned bright red without warning. He hadn't immediately noticed where the so-called "nude" was located. When he filled in this gap, he exclaimed in shock.

"Cover that breast, I cannot bear to see it! It's as if it is coming right at the viewer! Completely lewd! Why..why...It's as if an animated bosom is being seductively aimed in the direction of my young and impressionable child!"

Immediately, the other exhibition visitors turned around, perplexed. With bulging eyes and foam at his lips, Professor Jones pointed a cautious finger at the painting.

"I... I... Indy... Herman... I forbid you to set your eyes on this... this...," he stammered, outraged. But the damage was done. "Greeks and Romans

knew to portray the breast as a robust thing to be admired, nothing like this Frenchman's tawdry scribble designed to intoxicate the baser elements of men!"

Herman gazed at the spectacle with interest, hoping to catch a glimpse of the guilty flesh. Herman turned his head sideways and blushed. He was looking in the wrong area. As for Indy, he shook his head disdainfully. In public with his dad and buddy was the last place he wanted to see something like that, even if Indy did appreciate the lack of rules in many of the new art movements.

"Don't you know that this painting caused a scandal in Europe, Dad?" Indy replied. "It was even rejected from the Salon des Indépendants in Paris last year. I don't find it shocking at all. It's much ado about nothing. One must live with the times, that's my philosophy!"

"Junior," the professor replied, trembling, "if my era is only good for producing this kind of visual mess, then I refuse to be a part of it. No, I am not of my time! Bury me among marble busts."

Deep down, Indy thought his father was absolutely right. In the end, his place was indeed among old manuscripts and this foray into modernity only confirmed it.

While Indy pondered these thoughts, the professor verbally accosted a guard.

"I will complain to the mayor of New York!" Henry Jones shouted. "It's a scandal! How dare you show such obscenities to women, to innocent children?!"

"But sir, please calm down," the guard tried to



soothe him. "If this exhibition displeases you, why not go to the Metropolitan Museum? There you will see more... classical works."

"Exactly where I am going tonight to meet the mayor. You see, I am invited to the inauguration of the new wing. And believe me, they will hear from me! This painting, it's... it's like a bull in a china shop!"

Amid the laughter and of the other visitors, Indy pulled his father by the sleeve, while Herman made a discreet retreat towards the exit.

With a crimson face, convulsing, Henry Jones swore vehemently, albeit a little too late, that he would not be fooled again.

## Chapter 4

### Un Metro Retro

Back at their hotel, the three “provincials” set about changing. They needed to put on tuxedos for the gala evening at the Metropolitan Museum.

“Say, Dad,” suggested Indy, “maybe we could take the subway to get to the museum?”

Indy unfolded the map he never parted with. He had practically memorized it during the train journey.

“Let’s see... If we get off at the 79th Street station, we just have to cross Central Park to get there.”

A quick mental calculation led the professor to agree that it was not reasonable to consider walking over forty blocks...

“I’m wary of this underground train,” he grumbled, “but I think you’re right: we don’t have a choice. We have to live with the times,” he sighed resignedly. “So, we’ll go to the Metropolitan by... the son’s-way!”

He glanced at his son out of the corner of his eye.

“Not bad, huh? A little play on words?” he asked, hoping for a reaction.

When none came, he frowned.

But his son wasn’t without his own wit.

“Excuse me, Dad,” replied Indy, “I always catch your jokes with a subway delay.”

“Ha! Ha! Well done, Junior! A subway delay... Ha! Ha!”

Clearly, the professor was doing his best to

keep the group's spirits up. But Indy wasn't fooled. He just wondered how long his father could keep up the act. He knew spending those pennies rather than exercise killed him.

Meanwhile, Herman felt much more comfortable with the idea of using public transportation.

"Yeah, we dodged the bullet," he whispered to his friend.

Indeed, the prospect of hors d'oeuvres at a high society soirée pleased him immensely. As long as he could get there in a state to eat.

In the heart of Manhattan the first subway had been in operation since 1901. It had enjoyed a success similar to that of the Paris metro, inaugurated nine years earlier.

But Professor Jones, incapable of appreciating the wonders of the modern world at their true value, remained tight-lipped throughout the entire journey, except to complain. "Are we still far?" he asked after only two stations.

"Five more to go," replied Indy, phlegmatically. His father started grumbling again. It was stronger than him! Indy wondered once again why he had insisted so much on having his father accompany them.

He kept grumbling for no reason, ever since their departure from Utah. Obviously, Professor Jones wasn't improving with age!

Was it an onset of dementia or the first signs of early senility? Only the future held the answer to this distressing question.

Many guests were already crowded in the

south wing of the Metropolitan Museum when the professor and his two companions made their entrance. Immediately, the museum curator rushed toward them with arms outstretched.

“My dear Henry! It is an unparalleled pleasure for me to welcome such a great patron like you to this new building.” He made sure that a good part of the assembly was listening attentively. “I have no fear in declaring loudly and proudly,” he exclaimed, “that without you, dear Professor Jones, the Medieval Art collection of the Metropolitan wouldn’t be... um... what it is!” A thunderous applause greeted this compliment.

“The pleasure is mine, Mr. Edwards, I assure you,” replied the professor, forcing himself to appear modest. “Allow me to introduce my son, Juni... I mean, Indiana. And here is his friend Herman Mueller.”

“Delighted... delighted,” murmured the curator quietly, shaking hands vigorously with the two young boys. “They are great art enthusiasts too, I have no doubt,” he added with a knowing wink.

“Absolutely,” confirmed the professor. “How did you guess?”

“I led them to the Armory Show this afternoon... and they greatly appreciated the Nude Descending a Staircase.” If he hoped to elicit a reaction from Mr. Edwards, he was not disappointed. The latter put a finger to his lips and began shaking his head like a semaphore.

“Don’t mention this painting in front of the mayor,” whispered Mr. Edwards. “Oh no? Why

not?”

“Well, he’s furious that he wasn’t consulted before exhibiting this horror to the public.”

“You’re right, what a horror!” agreed Henry Jones, internally making a vow to confront the mayor of New York and ask for his opinion on said painting...

But he didn’t say a word to the curator and gracefully accepted the glass of champagne presented to him by a liveried waiter. Among the guests were numerous artists, dignitaries, and millionaires.

Herman had never seen so many high-profile people gathered in one place. With a glass of orangeade in one hand and half a dozen canapés in the other, he seemed to be gobbling them up like there was no tomorrow. The melodious strains of a Mozart sonata created a subdued atmosphere. Except perhaps for the curator, no one spoke louder than a whisper, for fear of disturbing it.

“These canapés are really good,” commented Herman, as a true connoisseur.

“You shouldn’t eat so much, Hermie,” replied Indy. “If by chance we miss the last metro, you’ll never make it back on foot. You’ll puke for sure.”

“Gloup,” let out our gourmand. “What time does it pass?” What Indy didn’t know was that they wouldn’t be returning to their hotel that night.

Neither by metro nor on foot. Because a certain Enzo Vitelli had decided otherwise.



## Chapter 5

### Panic in Central Park

Suddenly, the piano stopped playing its Mozartian chords to give way to Mr. Edwards' deep and booming voice. "My dear friends... my dear... friends... may I request your attention, please... Please, my dear friends."

No one seemed inclined to interrupt to listen to him, so he had to resort to his natural authority.

"My dear friends," he repeated in a sweet voice, "I ask you to stop! Some of his 'dear friends' complied without further ado. The others continued to chat eagerly. "I ASK FOR YOUR ATTENTION," the curator then hammered, in the same voice Professor Jones had called "stentorian". Of course his dad would use an adjective from three hundred years ago and of course, being his son, Indy knew the word's entomology.

This time, all the "dear friends" put an end to their chatter.

"Ladies and gentlemen," finally proclaimed Mr. Edwards, "I do not hesitate to affirm loudly and clearly, it is a great joy for me to welcome among us tonight the chief magistrate of our city, namely the mayor of New York."

A deathly silence underscored this distressing news.

Mr. Edwards did not let this discourage him. "He will now honor us with his words," he continued, beaming. "Mr. Mayor... under your applause!"

A few of the dignitaries then pretended to

clap on cue - which delighted the mayor of New York.

The mayor had been shot in the neck in an assassination attempt three years earlier aboard the SS Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse as it was bound for Europe. A gruesome photo taken moments later sold many copies of the New York Tribune newspaper. Mayor Gaynor had ideas that Indy liked, and people were talking about him as a candidate for president.

The legend had it he still had the assassin's bullet lodged in his throat. With honor, a stage was placed in front of him. The mayor gracefully ascended it and took out a few notes from the inner pocket of his jacket. The assembly had eyes only for him, and people murmured about how his voice had changed since the shooting before he began. But just as he opened his mouth to begin his speech, a rather unexpected cry rang out in the reception hall.

"Hands up, everyone!"

The mayor stood there with his mouth open, unable to decide whether or not to close it. He obviously was not in the mood to be shot again.

Meanwhile, Indy quickly spotted the author of this cry: a waiter in uniform, who stood right next to Herman. The individual held a violin in its case in one hand and a revolver in the other.

"My God!" exclaimed the museum curator. "I do not hesitate to affirm loudly and clearly, it's our Stradivarius! The one we just received from Italy!"

The next moment, the waiter put an arm around Herman's neck, squeezing so tightly that he almost strangled him.



“Let me go, or I’ll blow his brains out!” the man barked with a strong Italian accent. A murmur ran through the crowd.

Professor Jones and Indy watched the scene in horror. Herman, with bulging eyes, had dropped his glass of orangeade and his handful of petits fours.

Recovered from his surprise, the Mayor of New York tried to intervene. For a guy who had previously been shot in the neck he was amazingly composed.

“Come on, pull yourself together,” he advised the hostage-taker. “Release this young man, and you can leave. You have my word that no one will try to pursue you. However if you do not surrender immediately you are certain, sooner or later, to end up in prison!”

“Take me as a hostage instead,” suggested Indy.

“That’s not...” his father tried to retort. But he immediately stopped himself: indeed, he felt just as responsible for Herman as he did for Indy. And all in all, Indy had a better chance of escaping his captor than his friend did.

However, the latter refused to hear anything of it.

“No way! Are you taking me for a fool? Now, I’m going to leave, and you’re not going to move. Otherwise, I’ll kill him.”

With a gesture, the mayor ordered the guards not to make the slightest move.

The revolver pressed against the temple of

poor Herman, who emitted small panicked moans, the man dragged his victim, step by step, toward the exit.

The onlookers watched the scene, petrified. No one uttered a word. No one attempted to intervene. A few seconds later, the thief and his hostage found themselves in the deserted Central Park.

“I beg you,” pleaded Herman. “Spare me. I’ll do whatever you want. Have mercy on me!” The man turned toward him and aimed his gun in his direction. He was only about five feet away from his victim.

“Shut up, or I’ll skin you alive. Got it?” He cocked the revolver, his finger on the trigger. Unable to articulate a single syllable, Herman simply nodded repeatedly.

But suddenly, a gunshot rang out. Herman collapsed to the ground as if every bone in his body had turned to gelatin simultaneously. The Italian stared at his hostage in astonishment. How could he have succumbed so easily? Only one bullet had been fired. What bad luck!

The hostage taker’s gaze shifted to where the gunshot had come from. He turned towards a thicket of dense bushes about three hundred meters away. To imagine that the two policemen on duty at the museum could hit a moving target at such a distance was to ascribe to them a talent they certainly lacked.

The Italian then leaned over Herman and shook him like a ragdoll. He realized there was no blood.

“Come on, wake up, you chicken! You weren’t



hit by that bullet. You're just a scaredy-cat!"

"Huh... what... how?" stammered Herman, his head buried in his hands, face against the ground.

"Get up, you coward! Those idiots are just shooting in the air to scare us."

Indeed, one, then two more shots tore through the silence of the night, but in vain. The fugitives resumed their frantic race through New York's sweltering heat. The hot, heavy atmosphere made the air unbreathable. Panting, Herman collapsed to the ground again.

"Do whatever you want with me, sir," pleaded the young boy. "I'm exhausted. I'm not used to this kind of exercise. And... I've just recovered from a severe case of the measles."

"I think you should have eaten fewer sweets," retorted the Italian.

"I beg you... please," Herman insisted, gasping for air. "Leave without me. Give me back... my freedom. You'll go much... much faster and farther without me."

The Italian stared at him for a long moment, as if hesitating. Then he shook his head vigorously.

"No, I want you to testify in my favor when I disappear," he replied in an enigmatic tone. "And for that, you must accompany me to my place. There, you will understand."

And once again, he pointed his gun in the direction of the young boy. Disheartened, Herman struggled to get up.

"We're only... about a hundred meters from the metro station. Come on, one last effort!"

“Ohhh!” lamented the unfortunate Herman.  
“I knew it... I shouldn’t have followed... Indy to New York. This city truly deserves... its reputation as a city of all... dangers! Ohhh!”

As the words passed from his lips it sounded like a tire losing its last cubic millimeters of oxygen.

## Chapter 6

### **The apple doesn't fall far from the tree.**

“Like father, like son,” muttered one of the shadows as they trailed the fugitives about a hundred meters behind them.

Clearly, the Italian lacked the qualities of a professional criminal. Indeed, one of the shadows kept grumbling, “Junior, this is the last time I...” only to be promptly interrupted by a softer voice firmly ordering them to be quieter.

But the thief paid no heed.

It took only a few minutes for him and his exhausted hostage to reach the metro entrance on the other side of Central Park, opposite the Metropolitan Museum. They descended into the underground, seeking refuge in the cool haven.

“We’re going downtown,” the Italian told Herman. “Towards the south of the city.”

“No, you’re going in that direction. I... I’m staying... here,” Herman replied, on the verge of apoplexy.

“Come on, get on!” the Italian ordered harshly. “Are you a man or a wimp?”

“A wimp,” Herman repeated without hesitation.

The next moment, a train emerged loudly from the tunnel. The Italian grabbed Herman by the collar and pushed him unceremoniously into the first carriage.

The two shadows from the park - who were none other than Indy and his father - slipped furtive-



ly into the next carriage.

It was then that Indy realized they were not alone in trailing the fugitives. They themselves were being followed! Undoubtedly, since their departure from the museum, two figures wearing black hats and with Mediterranean features had been tailing them.

“Hmm,” thought Indy, not wanting to alarm his father for the moment.

In a deafening clamor, the subway train started moving again, puffing, sweating, screeching, as if it were already a hundred years old.

“I really don’t trust this infernal machine,” grumbled Professor Jones. “If there’s a fire, we’re done for.”

“Now’s not the time to think about fires,” retorted Indy, looking up at the ceiling. “We have other, more immediate concerns.”

“What kind of concerns, Jun... Indy?” The young boy hesitated. Should he inform his father or not? Well, after all, it was better to warn him so that he could behave with necessary caution.

“Well, for your information, Dad, we are being followed too.”

“What are you saying, Junior?”

“I mean, Senior Jones, that we are being followed by two perfectly suspicious individuals. And I suggest you keep your voice down. Otherwise, they might realize we’ve spotted them, which is not in our best interest.”

The professor nervously twirled his beard and adjusted his gold-rimmed glasses. “Is it the police?”

he ventured in a low voice, not really believing it.

"I doubt they recruit their personnel among people my age," replied Indy.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, one of those two shady characters can't be much older than me. As for the other, I'd guess he's in his twenties."

"A fourteen-year-old kid?!" exclaimed the professor. Indy wrinkled his nose. "If I'm not mistaken by what you told me yourself just the day before yesterday, some 'fourteen-year-old kids' have more common sense than certain people over forty..." Caught in the act of contempt toward his son, Henry Jones had no choice but to make amends.

"I apologize, Indy. I believe I'm losing my composure. What do you suggest, my boy?" Before answering, Indy took a moment to savor this response. For the second time that day, his father had apologized to him.

"Here's what I propose: let's play along until the end. Let's pretend as if nothing's wrong. We'll follow the thief and Herman, and these two guys are following us too. In my opinion, the one they're interested in is the Italian."

"I hope you're right," conceded the professor half-heartedly. "But what will we do if our pursuers threaten us? And... if they're armed?"

"We'll figure it out," replied Indy with the recklessness of his fourteen years. The Italian and Herman got off at Canal Street station.

"Little Italy!" exclaimed Indy. "Of course,

it makes sense: New York's Italian quarter. That's where our man lives!"

Still oblivious to being tailed by two sets of pursuers, the Italian led Herman into a dark and sticky alleyway. The air clung to shirt sleeves, and the atmosphere buzzed with gnats and mosquitoes.

"Do you still see them?" asked the professor anxiously.

"No, but I sense them," replied Indy confidently.

Behind them, two shadows hugged the walls. And these shadows were dangerously close.

"Pick up the pace," murmured Indy to his father. "I feel like those two fellows want to make contact."

"Look, Indy," suddenly exclaimed the professor. "Isn't that our Italian over there with Herman?"

"Exactly, Dad. And they're entering a building. Let's go!"

As they heard a threatening voice behind them, but odd because it was also one that seemed to be going through a change, with strange tonal intonations at times.

"I command you to stop! Uh, to stop!"

"If we squeeze his nose, I'm sure more milk will come out," quipped Indy.

But his smile froze when he heard the next sentence spoken by the older of their two pursuers. A pistol in the swaggering young teenager's hand changed the equation instantly.

"Hands up, or I'll shoot you down like dogs!" The younger of the two spoke with a less pro-

nounced Italian accent than his elder. But Professor Jones hardly paid attention. This threat had traumatized him so much that he felt his legs giving way under him.

“Junior, it’s time for you to prove to me that you indeed have more common sense than I do,” he whispered to his son.

“Like father, like son,” retorted the latter with a smirk.

At that moment, lightning streaked across the sky, followed soon after by a deafening clap of thunder.

“Help! Help!” cried the terrified professor.

“You can call for help all night long, Signor Jones,” sneered the teenager. “But nobody will answer you. In Little Italy, I make the rules.”

As if to confirm his words, another bolt of lightning split the sky, followed by a loud boom.

“Junior, it’s the end of the world,” moaned Professor Jones.  
Torrents of rain began to pour down.

“The gods are angry, Signor Jones,” declared Ernesto in a cavernous voice. “If I were you, I wouldn’t upset them any further.”

“In case you didn’t know, uh, God is Italian,” chimed in his young companion. “And He doesn’t tolerate the removal of His most beautiful treasures from our country. So, if you’re the ones who have the violin, tell us what you’ve done with it.”  
Indy and his father exchanged a bewildered glance.

“But it’s not us who stole it!” the professor naively replied. “It’s that guy who took Herman hos-

tage! They went into that building over there! The one with the parked car in front.”

“Not at all,” interrupted Indy. “They went in that direction,” he said, gesturing towards an adjacent street.

“Don’t bother, Junior! Hey, hey! We know where he lives. We just wanted to make sure we weren’t on the wrong track,” said the older of the two. “Now that we know for sure where the violin is, we just have to go get it. And you’re coming with us.”

The professor opened his mouth to protest, but a nudge from Indy quickly changed his mind. “Don’t worry, Dad,” he whispered. “God will recognize His own.”

## Chapter 7

### The “Just” Prize

“Name, school, and grade?” the youngest one asked Indy. “You must not be much older than me, huh?”

“My name is Henry and I’m headed to ninth grade, I’m 14 and my school is in Utah,” grumbled Indy.

“But I possess hardly more common sense than a grammar schooler...,” he added to himself. “How could I be stupid enough to find myself in this situation?” Indy also winced giving out his ‘real’ name, but best to play coy with this guy for now.

“Fourteen years old? 1899!” exclaimed the young ruffian. “Last century boys!” “You are very dapper for a thug, sir,” chipped in the Professor “quite ‘snorky’ as the Brits say.”

For a moment, a smirk distorted his interlocutor’s face. Then he regained his composure.

A smile with mixed meanings.

“Let me introduce myself: Alfonso Cap.o...” the boy paused after pronouncing the “cap” and “o” sounds. Indy had noticed he was a very well dressed 14 year old. “Snorky, everyone calls me that,” said Al.

“Pleasure...” replied Indy reluctantly. “One thing is for sure: if you continue like this, if you are a ‘capo’ in a gang you are destined for a bright future... in prison!”

Raindrops splashed on the hats, their upturned brims threatening to collapse under the weight of the water.

“Snorky” was also known as Al Capone from Park Slope to Manhattan. He had just used what would prove to be a longtime alias for the first time. He was a very focused young man.

“Think again, Junior. I’m too smart and too well protected to go to prison,” he taunted. “The one who’ll catch me hasn’t been born yet.”

“That’s enough!” interrupted the elder of the two. “My name is Ernesto Carloni, I’m twenty years old, and I know perfectly well how to use this weapon,” he announced, brandishing a large caliber gun in front of his prisoners. “Let’s get down to the business at hand.”

Boom! Bam! thundered the elements, raging. Just a second before this cannon shot from the sky, lightning had struck just a few meters away, hitting a tree.

The charred corpse of the tree, in a sorry state, was still smoking.

“My word, we’re right below it!” exclaimed the professor, panicked. “We need to leave. I don’t want to end up grilled!”

“Quiet, professor! Have some courage, for the sake of Madonna!” To further convince his prisoner, he waved the barrel of his revolver just two centimeters from his nose.

“All right, listen to me now. We know this man who kidnapped your friend. It’s Enzo Vitelli. He stole something that belongs to us.”

“The violin from the Metropolitan?” exclaimed Indy. “It belongs to you?”

“Not exactly,” replied Ernesto. “To tell you



the truth, it be..."

"Shut up!" interrupted Al.

The young boy turned to Indy.

"Suffice it to say that Vitelli owes us a debt.

A huge debt. So, we propose a deal: let's team up to recover the violin and your friend."

With a glance, Henry Jones made it clear to his son that he had no desire to join forces with the New York underworld, even to rescue Herman from his captor.

But Indy, driven more by curiosity than by the desire to free Herman as soon as possible, agreed to play along.

"Okay," he replied. "What's your plan?" Al 'Brown' Capone puffed out his chest with pride. After giving a disdainful glance to his "chaperone," he began to explain his project in detail.

"Ernesto and Professor Jones will go up the fire escape stairs. We're in luck because of the rain, no one sleeps on them. Meanwhile, I'll go up with Indy through the interior staircase. This way if Vitelli tries to escape he'll be caught like a rat."

This was too much for the professor, who, ignoring the most elementary prudence, pointed a threatening finger at Al Capone. "Absolutely not! Listen here Snorky, you're nothing but low-level crooks! Petty criminals! Threats to civilized society! Barbarians! Demoniactal scum!" In response to this torrent of insults, Ernesto pressed the barrel of his revolver against the professor's temple, silencing him instantly.

In the pouring rain, the four shadows of the



night ran towards the building where Enzo Vitelli lived. They then acted meticulously according to the plan devised by Al. But when the latter entered the apartment with Indy, he realized that Vitelli had disappeared, as if by magic.

“It’s impossible!” exclaimed Al. However, he had to face the truth. All that remained in the apartment was Vitelli’s hostage. Tied to a chair and gagged, Herman let out small, heartbreaking cries.

Next, Ernesto entered the apartment, followed by Henry Jones, who was experiencing a sneezing fit. “I always carry an umbrella with me,” he grumbled. “So, naturally, I caught a cold...” Ernesto, his fists clenched, glanced at his companion.

“We’ve been deceived!” he exclaimed, furious. Al nodded in agreement. “I don’t understand how Vitelli knew we were coming. Unless...” He turned to Herman, who whimpered in his chair. “You tipped them off, you miserable worm! Well, I’m going to kill you! You’re going to die!” He then drew a revolver from the inner pocket of his overcoat and pressed it against the helpless hostage’s temple.

“I can’t stand being double crossed,” barked Capone, his eyes bloodshot. In a matter of seconds, a truly striking transformation had taken place. The sneering and grating teenager had given way to a ferocious beast, baring its fangs with a seething and carnivorous appetite for vengeance.

“Stop!” ordered Ernesto. “Think for a moment! How could he have warned Vitelli of our arrival? He didn’t even know we were coming... Just an hour ago, he was stuffing his face at the museum,

unable to foresee what was about to happen. It was by chance that Vitelli took him hostage, don't forget that."

Lips curled, eyes bulging, Al Capone turned to him. "I don't care! I want him to pay. I want a culprit to be punished. They made a fool of me. He must pay the just price!" Ernesto shook his head. "That will happen again in the future," he promised. "But if you kill everyone, you won't live long. I guarantee you that."

"Exactly," added Indy, he then turned to Capone. "Listen Snorky, if you kill everyone, pardon... if you kill everyone, someone will take you out before your time." These words had a beneficial effect. The young gangster's intelligence resurfaced. Capone sheathed his weapon without argument. Al had regained his composure as quickly as he had lost his mind.

"What do we do now, Ernesto?" he asked.

"We have only one thing to do," replied his elder.

"Get out of here as fast as possible." Without another word, they then headed for the door of the apartment. However, just before leaving, they turned one last time.

"We'll meet again," they threatened in unison. "I look forward to it," replied Indy in the same tone. "Not me!" muttered the professor under his breath.

## Chapter 8

### Master and Servant

“My poor Hermie!” exclaimed Indy as he freed his best friend from his bonds. “You must regret coming to New York!”

“Oh, Ind... Indi... Indidi... I am... so glad to see you...” stammered the hostage, trembling in every limb.

“He’s caught a chill too, in this weather!” lamented the professor. “If only we could close that cursed window! But no use, it’s stuck.”

“I’d say Herman is shivering with fear,” corrected Indy. “But trust me, you have no reason to be afraid anymore, Hermie. They’re all gone! Poof!”

“Poof! Poof! Gone!” exclaimed Herman then. Speak of a relief! I thought my last hour had come. When he had regained his senses and was more comfortably settled, Indy leaned towards him and tried to learn more.

“Did you manage to find out anything interesting about this Vitelli?”

Herman then told him a rather strange story. “Yes, he’s a poor guy who earns a measly salary,” he explained.

“That’s no reason to kidnap people and steal violins!” Henry Jones exclaimed. He paced the room back and forth, like a caged bear. Every two minutes, he took out a damp handkerchief from his pocket and pretended to wipe his nose.

“Well, Vitelli has to pay a third of that salary to his padrone,” Herman continued.



“His padrone?” repeated the professor.

“Padrones are shady characters who arrange employment and housing for new immigrants,” explained Indy. “The ocean crossing is exhausting, and when they land in this unknown world many are completely disoriented.”

“And to top it off,” intervened Professor Jones, “they’re herded like cattle at Ellis Island, aren’t they? So that the authorities can examine them and determine whether or not they’ll be allowed to settle in the United States?”

“Exactly, Dad. So when immigrants emerge from that hell, the padrones have no trouble convincing them to trust them. But in truth, they take advantage of the naivety of these unfortunate people.”

“I was unaware of the existence of this kind of trafficking,” confessed the professor, sheepishly. Millions of immigrants arrived in New York every year. Mostly from Europe, they were in search of the “Promised Land,” where they hoped to find employment and enough to feed their families. The boldest or most reckless hoped to make their fortune there.” Continue, Hermie, we’re listening,” said the professor.

“Well, one day, Vitelli had enough of being exploited.”

“We understand!” approved the professor.

“Dad, let him speak, please. Otherwise, we’ll never finish!” Herman expected an explosion of anger from the professor. But no, nothing happened. Indeed, Indy’s father had bought himself a good

behavior!

“So,” Herman continued, “Vitelli eventually demanded his independence. So, the padrone called in the Mafia, the ‘Black Hand.’”

“What? The crime syndicate? Those nefarious thugs?!” exclaimed the professor.

“Yes, and the two Italians who followed you are their representatives. You see, for several months Vitelli’s debts to his ‘protector’ have continued to grow. So, the padrone forced him to commit a robbery to repay his debt.”

“This kind of slavery still exists in the 20th century!” thundered the professor. “Well, it’s a scandal! I’ll talk to the mayor of New York about it tomorrow. Our civilization is truly in decline!” Impatiently gesturing with his hand, Indy signaled his father to be quiet. Herman wasn’t finished. The worst was probably yet to come.

“They had Vitelli hired among the extras employed by the museum for the inauguration ceremony of the new wing. His mission was to steal the violin that the Metropolitan had just received.”

“What was the Mafia’s interest?” asked the professor. “I don’t understand.”

Indy took it upon himself to respond. “It’s an instrument of great value, crafted in 1691 by Stradivarius, the greatest violin maker of all time,” he explained. “I read about it in the museum’s catalog. This violin is worth a fortune, and the Mafia would have sold it for a very good price to the Metropolitan.”

“That’s correct,” confirmed Herman. “That’s



what they told Vitelli.”

“And what if he hadn’t obeyed them?” asked Indy. “What would have happened to him?”

Herman twisted his fingers, as if what he had to confess implicated him personally.

“Come on, we’re listening, Herman,” encouraged the professor in an encouraging voice.

“Well, Vitelli has a son,” explained Herman. “This son is blind. And they threatened to execute him if Vitelli didn’t steal the violin from the Metropolitan.”

“But that’s abominable!” exclaimed Professor Jones, before succumbing to another sneezing fit. “We must...” His words were interrupted as he tried to shake off some more of those sneezes without much success.

“You should take off those wet clothes, Dad,” suggested Indy. “Actually, I’ll do the same. If we put them in front of this stove, they’ll be dry by tomorrow morning.”

“Tomorrow morning?” stammered Herman. “But we’re not going to stay here all night, are we? It’s too dangerous.”

“We don’t have a choice,” replied Indy. “There’s no more subway, and we’re unlikely to find a taxi in this area. No, the best thing to do is to get some rest here, warm and safe. Tomorrow morning, it’ll be daylight, as Mom always used to say, and we’ll figure things out.” He had uttered the last phrase without thinking. The memory had come naturally to him. Immediately, he turned to his father, as if to apologize. The professor had tears in his eyes. And

if he hadn't had a cold, you could have sworn he was crying.

## Chapter 9

### Scout's Honor

The next morning the trio was awakened by the rays of a blazing sun. "The weather has changed completely," remarked the professor. "Compared to last night, it's like day and night."

"You couldn't have said it better," remarked Indy with a mischievous wink. Indy's and the professor's clothes had dried, and the two "adventurers" were ready to set off to help Vitelli.

"We need to establish a battle plan," suggested Indy. "But where do we start? We don't even know where Vitelli has fled. Nor where his son is," added the professor.

For long seconds, a heavy silence filled the apartment. Then, as if nothing had happened, Herman announced, "Vitelli did tell me where he had hidden his son. But he made me swear on my honor not to tell anyone. So, I wouldn't want—"

"What wouldn't you want?" Indy interrupted, glaring at his friend.

"He wouldn't want to break his scout's promise," guessed the professor. "Isn't that right, Herman?"

Herman nodded, relieved that he had been understood. But he hadn't counted on Indy, who became visibly upset.

"You thought we were going to spill the beans, huh? Worse, that we were going to harm Vitelli's son? Come on, Herman, be reasonable!" argued Indy. "Sometimes I wonder if you have all your

wits about you!”

“He was shocked by last night’s ordeal,” interjected Henry Jones, sympathetically. “He’s not sure where he stands.”

“Indeed, I’m not sure where I stand. I was very shocked,” Herman admitted without hesitation. “So, please, don’t shock me further, Indy,” he pleaded.

Indy gave his friend the benefit of the doubt. But as much to buy time as to show understanding, he continued, “Fine, then, tell us where this boy is hidden, Herman.”

“In Niagara Falls.”

“In Niagara Falls...? You’re kidding!”

“Well, I mean, in Niagara Falls- the city where the falls are,” corrected Herman, who squirmed in his chair, embarrassed. “That’s where Vitelli fled before the arrival of the two mobsters. He has a cousin there.”

Indy turned to his father. The professor had adopted his serious expression, the one that meant, “No, we will not take any more risks. I formally oppose it.”

But Professor Jones was also a man, and above all, a father. He had no trouble putting himself in the shoes of the unfortunate Vitelli struggling with demonic scum.

“Okay, is everyone in agreement that we should head to the Falls?” asked Indy.

“Hmm. I don’t see any other solution,” replied the professor.

“I see one,” countered Herman. “I’ll take the

next train back to Utah. Right away.” He pretended to get up, but Indy placed a commanding hand on his shoulder.

“I thought your motto was ‘Scout’s honor,’ Herman. Do you think you’re worthy of that noble institution by fleeing your duty? By refusing to assist people in danger? Where did the sense of honor you boasted about just five minutes ago go?” Herman remained silent. Once again, Indy was imposing his will, and Herman couldn’t find anything to object to. God, life was so unfair!

“Alright, alright,” he finally conceded. “But I demand a hearty breakfast before we set off!”

“Agreed!” exclaimed Indy, smiling.

Ultimately, the prospect of embarking on a new adventure filled him with joy. Wasn’t that why his mother brought him into the world?

Now they just needed to find a car. The professor hadn’t brought enough money to rent one, let alone buy one. Would they find a kind soul to lend them one? Conversation turned to the question if Mr. Edwards, the curator of the Metropolitan Museum would be that soul?

“I don’t know him well enough to ask such a favor,” protested the professor.

“I have a feeling he won’t need much persuading,” retorted Indy.

And indeed, Edwards agreed to lend them a car. His car. A Stradivarius deserved that he take a few risks... especially since he had received a very worrying phone call that morning.

“My caller claimed to be from a youth gang

known as the 'Junior Forty Thieves'. He spoke as if he hadn't finished puberty yet."

"If it is the one I know, he's only fourteen," explained Indy.

"Fourteen?" exclaimed Edwards, astounded. "Goodness gracious, today's youth are out of control."

"Civilization is going downhill, that's what I keep saying," confirmed Professor Jones.

"What did he tell you?" Indy impatiently interjected.

The curator straightened his suit and his thoughts. "He asked for a ransom of ten thousand dollars, in exchange for returning the violin to the museum."

"Ten thousand dollars... hmm, that's not cheap," remarked Indy.

"Your words," Edwards almost choked. "Not cheap indeed. But... but..."

He didn't have time to finish. Indy was already leading his father towards the car.

"I beg you, no recklessness," pleaded the curator. "It's my personal car, and I'm very attached to it."

The problem was Professor Jones had only ever driven Ford Model T's, the most common model in the United States. However, the museum curator, a fervent admirer of Italian culture, had invested his dollars in a superb brand-new Isotta Fraschini. Professor Jones stared at the machine with owl-like eyes. The car purred happily in the morning sun.

"We won't have much room," he commented

sourly.

After circling the strange vehicle three times, he decided to get inside. A delicate operation that required superhuman effort from him. Once inside, he shifted into first gear and engaged the clutch delicately.

The car remained still.

The curator's eyes widened like an owl's. With dilated pupils and a sweaty forehead, he watched the scene with horror.

"I don't understand," Professor Jones apologized. "I shifted into first gear, but nothing happened."

Mr. Edwards leaned into his precious vehicle. Suddenly, a broad smile illuminated his papier-mâché face.

"I see, Professor! What you took for the gear lever is actually the handbrake."

"The handbrake?" exclaimed the professor, dumbfounded.

"Yes, it's an invention of the Isotta Fraschini factory, from last year. Isn't it marvelous? And so practical for hill starts!"

Henry Jones grumbled some unintelligible words about progress, the decline of American civilization, and the comparative merits of the Ford Model T and the latest Isotta Fraschini.

Then, Herman awkwardly squeezed into the interior, followed by Indy, who took up much less space, needless to say...

"Are you sure everything will be fine?" the curator asked, filled with anxiety. Losing a Stradivarius



would have been negligence. But losing a Stradivarius and an Isotta Fraschini would have been unforgivable! Unprecedented!

“Do you not want me to accompany you?”  
Edwards pleaded, struck by a last-minute remorse.

In response, his noble automobile surged forward, then jerked to a stop, surged forward again, and disappeared around the corner in a cloud of smoke.

“He asks if everything will be fine!” grumbled Professor Jones. “Bah! I would have preferred a Ford Model T! Now, that’s an automobile!”

## Chapter 10

### Grève de La faim

To reach Niagara Falls, they had to cross New Jersey and Pennsylvania: a journey of several hundred kilometers that would take two days, under scorching heat.

“Phew!” exclaimed Herman after fifty kilometers. “If we don’t stop for a soda and a sandwich soon I feel like I’m going to faint.”

Professor Jones, discomforted since the start by Herman’s elbow deeply embedded between his ribs, turned to his passenger with a sour expression.

“No way you’re eating,” he snapped. “You take up enough space as it is!”

Of course, this outburst could be attributed to fatigue and nervous tension, but Herman wasn’t used to being spoken to in such a manner. His chubby face scowled, and he crossed his arms over his chest in displeasure.

Immediately, the professor felt an indescribable relief. The boy’s elbow had left his ribs; he could finally breathe freely!

Fifteen minutes later, he himself felt overcome by hunger. “What if we stop for a bite to eat?” he suggested, noticing a rather inviting restaurant.

“Good idea!” exclaimed Indy, whose stomach was rumbling.

“Go ahead without me,” grunted Herman. “I wouldn’t want to inconvenience you with any extra weight. I’ll fast until Niagara Falls.”

Stunned by this rather unexpected declaration,

Indy and his father stared at their companion for a long moment, who displayed unwavering determination. Unfortunately, while he was gazing at Herman, the professor was no longer looking ahead. Unbeknownst to him, the car drifted to the left more and more until it brushed the opposite roadside. And as fate would have it, it came in the path of a livestock truck approaching at thirty kilometers per hour. In 1913 the car horn had not yet been invented, so the truck driver had no means of attracting the attention of the distracted driver of the Isotta Fraschini.

“Dad!!!” Indy screamed at the last moment. Too late. The livestock truck swerved, teetered precariously on two wheels, threatened to right itself for a moment, but was carried away by the weight of the animals and overturned into the ditch, amidst a chorus of mooing and lowing. Panicked, the professor pressed the brake pedal while pulling the handbrake, just to be sure. Herman and Indy were thrown forward and almost hit the windshield.

Somewhat dazed they staggered out of the car. Meanwhile, the livestock truck driver staggered with anger. “For heaven’s sake! Couldn’t you pay attention?!” he protested, waving his arms. Distressed, he turned to gaze at his overturned truck.

“We had prize animals in there! Prize animals, for heaven’s sake!” With some effort, two cows managed to extricate themselves from the truck. The shock hadn’t dampened their appetite, as they immediately began to graze on the abundant grass covering the embankment.

“I’m sorry,” apologized the professor. “I don’t



know where my head was!”

“You had your head somewhere else, Dad!” remarked Indy mockingly. Then he turned to the farmer. “Don’t worry, sir, we’ll help you get your vehicle upright again. Come on, Herman, lend a hand.”

With the four of them, they managed without too much difficulty to right the truck, which had not suffered significant damage in the accident.

“City folks, pah!” accused the farmer. “Just half an hour ago, we saw a black car pass by, it was licensed in the state of New York. Well, you don’t see that every day, so I spotted it.”

“Well, it was speeding, sir. Yes, speeding. Seems like you city folks think your time of death won’t come soon enough...”

Indy and his father exchanged a worried glance. A black car, coming from New York State?

“So what?”

“Sorry about the sandwich, Herman,” Indy said, closing the door of the Isotta Fraschini. “But if this vehicle belongs to Al and Ernesto, we don’t have a minute to lose.”

“How could they know that Vitelli hid his son at Niagara Falls?” Professor Jones wondered. “I thought he only told Herman.”

Indy shook his head in frustration.

“Unfortunately in Little Italy walls have ears. I suspect our two scoundrels didn’t go very far last night. And I wouldn’t be surprised if they even returned to the building to find out what we had in mind. Remember, Vitelli’s apartment window doesn’t



close... Damn! And you think..."

With a grim face, Indy nodded.

"Fortunately, we never mentioned Vitelli's cousin's address. So, with any luck, Al and Ernesto won't find it before us. Now, driver, let's go!"

"And keep your eyes straight ahead!" added Herman, suppressing a smile.

The young boy knew: revenge is a dish best served cold...

As night fell a decision had to be made: to continue or to stop at a hotel.

"If we keep driving," reasoned Indy, "you'll eventually drop from exhaustion, Dad. We risk another accident."

"But if we take a break, we'll lose even more ground," objected the professor. "At the speed they're driving, they might have already arrived."

"I doubt it," replied Indy. "Our car is one of the fastest on the market, and we're almost always driving at top speed. If they only had half an hour head start on us in the early afternoon, we shouldn't be far behind. The sun had just disappeared over the horizon, and the professor had to turn on the Isotta Fraschini's headlights. Plus," continued Indy, "I think Ernesto must be getting tired too. Al is too young to drive, so they'll have no choice but to stop."

"You're probably right," confirmed the professor, yawning widely.

"Here's my plan," continued Indy. "We keep driving and if we see a car matching the description provided by the farmer, we'll make sure it's them. If so, we'll get a little ahead of them and wait for them

at the next hotel.”

“And what if they decide to leave in the middle of the night?” Henry Jones questioned.

“At his age, Ernesto can probably get by with just a few hours of sleep to recover.”

“I hadn’t thought of that,” admitted Indy. He plunged back into his thoughts for a long moment, then suggested, “We’ll just have to take turns keeping watch, Herman and I. You, Dad, need as much sleep as possible, so you’ll be exempt.”

“I need sleep too!” protested Herman. He knew no one would pay attention to his complaint, but he didn’t care. He existed, darn it, and he was determined to make his two companions aware of it!

“In that case, we’ll be in trouble!” Indy joked. “But not the kind you dream of.”

“I don’t think I’ll be able to stay awake...” the professor intervened. “I’m not twenty anymore.” But Indy wasn’t listening anymore. He had just spotted a suspicious car.

“Look!” he exclaimed. “Look! That black car over there, parked in front of that hotel. It’s registered in New York State. It’s them!”

The professor immediately pressed the brake, and the deafening roar of the engine gave way to a soft purr.

“I’ll go take a closer look,” Indy said quietly, before stepping out of the car.

“Be careful, Junior. Don’t take unnecessary risks.”

Old habits die hard! The professor would always call his son “Junior”, Indy would always take

risks, and Herman would always place his stomach at the forefront of his concerns.



## Chapter 11

### Souvenirs, souvenirs...

With the discretion of a professional burglar, Indy slipped up to the suspicious car, hoping to discover a clue inside that would reveal the identity of its occupants. But he saw nothing inside except a small suitcase. Presumably, the travelers had stored their clothes there.

Determined to confirm his suspicions, the young boy approached the hotel. It had a restaurant adjoining the main building. Indy positioned himself to be able to see the customers from outside through an open window.

Only two other cars were parked in front of the hotel, which would make it easier to conceal himself. He removed the Stetson hat he always wore, pushed back his unruly lock of hair, and peered inside the restaurant.

It was a rather shabby dining room, where dirt oozed from the walls. The atmosphere was tainted with the smell of grease. Indy first spotted a young couple seated before a very simple meal. All smiles, the lovebirds seemed more interested in each other than in their food. A pang of nostalgia reminded Indy that he too had experienced that delightful feeling called “love” twice.

The previous year, during his adventure in the Klondike, he had met an “Italian nightingale,” the incredibly interesting Norma Bellini. And a few months earlier, during his expedition in Carolina, he had encountered Lizzie Ravenall, a Southern belle

from a fallen family. Her fiery temperament matched her flaming red hair, their adventure together had left him with an unforgettable memory. But now was not the time for reminiscing. Especially since, just behind the lovebirds, he had spotted his two sworn enemies of the moment. The teen gangster 'Snorky' and his sidekick Ernesto were devouring the leftovers of roast chicken with gusto. That's when Indy had a brilliant idea.

Why let the two mafiosi have all the leisure to hit the road in the early morning, or worse yet, in the dead of night? Wouldn't it be wiser to temporarily take them out of commission? One didn't need to be a mechanic to know that a car couldn't run if its tires were flat. So, Indy promptly deflated them. And to top it off, he went to find Herman and asked him for the extreme favor of a few pieces of sugar. He knew his friend never went anywhere without a proper bag of sweets. "But I'm going to faint..." Herman weakly protested.

These past three days had exhausted, if not all his sugar reserves, at least his reserves of willpower. And it was without a fight that he gave in to Indy's urging. He sacrificed his last reserve by slipping a few pieces of the precious commodity into the black car's gas tank. Five minutes later, the trio resumed their journey with light hearts. Thanks to his sacrifice, Herman could sleep soundly all night. I don't think our two companions will consume any gasoline during our trip."

"I don't know what I prefer..." Herman said the next morning. He was busy brushing his teeth

carefully in the hotel room's bathroom where the three travelers had stopped for the night.

"To sleep or to eat? To eat or to sleep? That is the question," Indy quipped. "My poor Herman, I don't envy you your existential dilemmas."

"My philosophical sneezes?" Herman queried from the bathroom. This exchange was interrupted by a series of loud gurgles and gargles.

"Careful, Herman: don't fall asleep while admiring your throat in the mirror," advised Indy, suppressing a laugh.

"How? Glub! What... Glub! Oh, darn! I swallowed it all!" groaned Herman. "Yuck! Why do you always have to torment me, Indy?" protested the young boy vehemently.

"Because if I didn't, you'd be bored, Hermie," replied the accused with reason. At that moment, Professor Jones entered the room with a towel wrapped around his waist.

"They don't know the virtues of hot water in this hotel!" he grumbled. "No way to get even a bucket for the tub! We live in a modern age."

"Hurry up, both of you!" ordered Indy. "Let's not underestimate the intelligence of our two pursuers. They must have found a garage to have their engine flushed and their tires inflated again."

"I'm deflated," observed Herman, offended. "Not only am I not allowed to feed myself, but, as if that weren't enough, I'm constantly mocked. And they expect me to be cheerful and full of energy."

"I apologize, Hermie," apologized Indy. "That wasn't very nice, you're right."

Herman stood frozen in place, toothbrush in hand. “Indy? Apologizing? It was the world turned upside down! But what had gotten into the Jones family?”

“Feeling unwell, my dear Herman?” inquired the father of his friend after donning his freshly cleaned glasses. “Did you swallow something wrong?”

“Glub! No, Professor, it’s just that... that...”  
“Don’t worry, dad. Herman’s just going through an existential crisis.”

“Oh, is that all? Well, good, because I was starting to worry about him,” replied the professor, relieved.

Herman stood rooted like a stump in the middle of the room. “I don’t know what would do me more good,” he muttered. “A cold shower or a train ticket to Utah...”

## Chapter 12

### Le tonnerre de l'eau et la grâce divine

At the end of an uneventful day of travel the trio arrived at Niagara Falls, the city where the world's most famous waterfalls were located. They started by heading straight to the police station to inquire about the route to Enzo Vitelli's cousin's house.

"We need to take the first right, then the second left," explained Indy as he climbed back into the dusty Isotta Fraschini.

"Phew! I'm glad to finally be at our destination," exclaimed Herman, his face beaming. "They say travel broadens the mind, but they forget to mention that it also stiffens the backbone!"

They easily reached number 7 Downpour Street, located not far from the Niagara Falls. In the distance, the deafening roar produced by millions of liters of raging water could be heard.

"Go park a little further, dad. Or even better, in an adjacent street. If Snorky and Ernesto manage to get here, they'll have a harder time finding us."

"Well thought out, son!" agreed the professor.

The car lurched forward, then another, and another, before coming to a sudden stop. Like a stubborn mule refusing to take another step.

Indy was filled with doubt.

"Dad, you've been keeping an eye on the fuel consumption, right?"

"Um... well, yes. Junior. Um... I... um."

“Dad! Don’t tell me we’re out of gas? How are we going to get going again?”

“Well, um... I don’t know, there must be a gas pump in this town!”

Dr. Jones felt a little guilty, too, for not thinking about this “detail”.

“Regardless, let’s first make sure that Vitelli and his son are safe and sound. They will probably tell us where to find fuel.”

As soon as it was said, the trio got out of the car and headed decisively towards number 7. It was Indy who knocked on the door.

And it was he who received the shock of his life when he discovered Enzo Vitelli’s cousin. His legs almost gave way beneath him.

“Indy!” she exclaimed. “What a surprise, it’s a surprise! I am so glad.”

And she threw her arms around him, kissing his flushed cheeks.

On the verge of fainting, the young man stammered.

“Norma? Norma Bellini? Is that really you? But wh... what are you doing here?”

“Come in quickly! I’ll tell you everything!”

Indy had met Norma Bellini on a boat called *City of Puebla*, which had taken them from San Francisco to Seattle the previous summer. The young girl, of Italian father and Native American mother, was going to the Klondike to meet her family, whom she had never seen before.

“Professor Jones, Indiana, Herman.”

Norma said solemnly, "I present to you my cousin, Enzo Vitelli, and his son, Arturo. As you know, Arturo is blind."

The professor began by frowning at Vitelli, but softened when his gaze fell on the young expressionless Arturo.

"I am sorry for behaving as I did," Vitelli began. "But I had no choice."

He turned to Herman.

"I hope you didn't suffer too much from this experience?"

"Pshaw!" retorted Herman. "I've never been so scared in my life!"

"But you are so brave!" Norma intervened. "I remember you behaved like a true hero in the Klondike," she added.

As Herman lowered his head, blushing, Norma exchanged a knowing glance with Indy.

"I am so happy that you agreed to help us," she continued. "With you, I feel stronger. I am sure we will defeat those thugs who terrorize..."

Indy's heart was racing. He had momentarily forgotten about his mission. Only his reunion with his friend mattered.

"How did you get here, Norma?" he asked, his voice choked with admiration.

"Well, after you left the Klondike, I spent a few months with my cousin Adam's family," explained the young girl. "Then I decided to visit one of my Italian cousins in New York, Enzo. He found me a job as a guide at Niagara Falls."







Norma turned to her cousin, gratitude shining in her eyes.

“You know, the Indians consider the falls a sacred place. According to legend on certain summer nights, the silhouette of a young Indian girl drowned in the 17th century can be seen at the entrance of the caves hidden behind the falls.”

Indy hung on to the words of the beautiful girl as if they were the nectar of the gods. He could have never imagined how all the beauty of Native American faces and Italian faces could so perfectly fit onto one face. The professor, on the other hand, had a much more rational judgment on this story.

“It’s not surprising,” confirmed Professor Jones. “This region was inhabited by the Iroquois, and the first European to access it was the French navigator Jacques Cartier in 1535. Moreover, Niagara is an Indian term meaning ‘thunder of water’. All of this area was taken from the Native Americans through methods ranging from disease to outright slaughter. I was just reading a horrible account from over in the Finger Lakes.”

This word snapped Indy out of the daydream Norma had immersed him in.

“All of this is very interesting, dad,” he interrupted, “but we didn’t come here to marvel at Niagara Falls. I remind you that Al and Ernesto are on our tail. And we’re out of gas.”

“But that’s impossible!” exclaimed Vitelli. “How did they find out that...?”

Indy cut him off mid-sentence.

“I suspect they overheard our conversation in your apartment,” he explained. “But rest assured: we’ve put them out of action for a while. However, we must not waste time. Do you have the violin?”

Upon hearing this question, young Arturo reached for the case containing the instrument. He opened it delicately and took out the Stradivarius from the Metropolitan Museum.

Then, clutching it tightly, he declared, “It’s mine. It belongs to me.”

The embarrassed silence greeted this declaration. Everyone seemed to want to claim ownership of this instrument! But what was its hidden virtue? Did it confer magical powers on its fortunate owner?

Under the wide-eyed gaze of Indy and the professor, young Arturo began to stroke the strings of the Stradivarius with his bow. And he produced the most moving melody they had ever heard.

With closed eyes, the child vibrated in unison with his instrument, as if they were one. At ten years old, he played like a virtuoso, varying the rhythms without fault, choosing the nuances with the skill of an experienced professional.

Even Herman forgot about his stomach for a few moments. It was then that a miracle occurred.

Norma, whom her compatriots had nicknamed “the Calabrian nightingale,” accompanied the poignant strains of the Stradivarius with her soprano voice. For a few sublime minutes, time seemed to stand still.

The four spectators of this scene, torn from the pages of some imaginary opera, listened with

mouths agape, enchanted by the beauty that emanated from Norma's throat and the rounded belly of the instrument, like a divine source.

As he contemplated the soprano, with her long black hair, half-closed eyes, and coppery skin, Indy thought bitterly about how inconvenient it was to be fourteen when the object of his affections was four years older!

A great opera enthusiast, Professor Jones wiped away a tear. And when the singer and violinist stopped vibrating their respective strings, he applauded enthusiastically for this exceptional performance.

## Chapter 13

### Le stratagème du stratège

Enzo Vitelli had not left his child during the pursuit. He gazed at him with an uncommon intensity, as if he were striving to see for two.

“Do you understand now why I acted as I did?” he asked the professor. “When my son plays this instrument, he is happy. It’s his only joy in life.”

“I understand,” replied Henry Jones, magnanimous. “And I would even say more: I forgive you.”

“Me too... munch... munch...,” added Herman, who had discovered one last piece of sugar at the bottom of his pants pocket.

With a grave expression, Enzo Vitelli decided that the time had come to confess. Indeed, he harbored a heavy secret. A secret he felt compelled to share with his new friends.

“Professor, Indy, Herman, I have made a decision,” he began. But he immediately stopped, his voice choked with sobs.

“What have you decided...?” insisted Indy with a compassionate tone.

Unable to utter another word, Vitelli buried his head in his hands.

“He has decided to keep the violin,” Norma answered. “He hopes to get enough money to have Arturo undergo an operation to regain his sight.”

“To regain his sight?” exclaimed Henry Jones, incredulous.

Norma nodded, her brown curls swirling around her under Indy’s gaze.

“Yes, he suffers from a disease that can be cured in some cases. But the operation is expensive. Very expensive. And Enzo is already deep in debt.”

“It would be wonderful,” agreed the professor, turning to Vitelli.

“I have to take this risk,” confirmed the latter. “If I sell the violin, I’ll get a very good price for it, there’s no shortage of collectors... And it’s Arturo’s only chance.”

Indy took off his Stetson and scratched his head. He needed to come up with a plan. And fast!

“We must not stay here another minute!” he exclaimed.

Just then, the door of the house burst open with a crash, and a voice, its youthful tone discordant, ordered, “Stay here! Nobody move!”

With a machine gun in hand, Al Capone and Ernesto Carloni looked at their prisoners with a sarcastic smile.

“Excuse us for interrupting your little family reunion,” sneered Ernesto, “but it seems you possess an item that belongs to us.”

Herman trembled violently. The nightmare was starting again!

Meanwhile, Indy tried to remain impassive while contemplating how to get out of this situation without bloodshed. Norma, boiling inside, would soon attempt a desperate action if Indy didn’t make a decision.

But to everyone’s surprise, it was Professor Jones who took the lead.

“Aaaaahhhhh!” he suddenly groaned, his face

contorted in a horrible grimace. "Help!"

Clutching his chest, eyes bulging, face flushed, he collapsed to the ground. All the while emitting impressive groans.

Immediately, Indy bent over him. "Dad!"

Taking advantage of the fact that the two mobsters couldn't see his face, Henry Jones winked at his son. Then he began to roll around on the ground, groaning and screaming loudly, until he found himself at the feet of the two gangsters, who were at their wits' end.

Taking advantage of their momentary daze he grabbed each of them by the ankles and tipped them backward. As Al 'Snorky' Capone fell, he inadvertently pressed the trigger of the machine gun, and a series of bullets quickly dug holes in the ceiling.

"My God!" exclaimed Norma, panicked.

"Help me!" called out Indy, who was holding Ernesto down, his knee pressed into the mobster's stomach.

Norma and Vitelli didn't need to be told twice. They rushed over to young Al and quickly subdued him.

"What do we do now?" questioned Norma.

"We'll tie them up," replied Indy.

"With what?" asked Norma. "I have nothing to bind them with."

In his corner, Herman still trembled like a leaf, in stark contrast to young Arturo who held his violin firmly in hand.

While he mastered his fear, the young blind boy also tamed his thoughts. He found the solution.

"The clothesline from the garden," he suggested calmly. "Do you want me to fetch it, Norma?"

"Absolutely not, Arturo," intervened his father. "These ruffians may have placed accomplices around the house. I'll go myself."

He turned to the professor. "Come and help Norma restrain them," he ordered, pointing to Capone. "Don't let him escape!"

Unfortunately, Vitelli didn't have time to carry out his decision. Seizing a moment of Indy's inattention, Ernesto bent himself and flung the boy two meters away. Immediately, Al got up and shoved Norma with such force that she fell backward.

In the chaos, Indy only had time to grab Ernesto's machine gun, and he quickly aimed it at the two mobsters.

"Don't move, or I'll shoot," he threatened.

Like a malevolent echo, those same words were repeated by the sneering teenager who also held a machine gun aimed at Indy.

"Don't move or I'll shoot too," Al replied with a predatory smile. "What do you say, Junior?" he added mockingly.

Helpless, the professor, Vitelli, Norma, Arturo, and Herman watched the scene unfold without saying a word.

"I conclude that the situation is deadlocked," Indy reasoned logically. "Either we kill each other, which is not in the interest of either of us, or we use common sense. So, Snorky, I have a proposition for you."

“I’m listening.”

The only problem was that Indy had nothing to suggest. Everything had happened too quickly; he hadn’t had time to think. Once again, it was the professor who came to the rescue, with a rather clever solution.

“In chess, the best solution in a stalemate like this is for the opponents to separate... until the next game,” he declared, smiling as he stood up. “Indeed, neither side can harm the other immediately. Therefore, I propose that we go our separate ways, and you two gentlemen of the Mafia go yours. I have no doubt that we will have the opportunity to meet again soon.”

Al and Ernesto exchanged a wary glance. Was this really the best outcome? Meanwhile, Indy remembered that the gas tank of the Isotta Fraschini was empty. On foot, the six fugitives wouldn’t get very far. Al and Ernesto, on the other hand, had their car.

“Papa, I must admit you’re a cunning strategist, and we all admired your little ruse. Faking a heart attack, it was clever!” Indy praised.

The professor puffed up with pride. “But tell me,” continued Indy, “aren’t you forgetting a small detail?”

“A detail, Junior? What detail?”

“You didn’t happen to check something, did you?” Indy insisted, without revealing the nature of this “detail” to the two mobsters.

At that moment, Norma intervened. “Very well, Mr. Jones, Indy, Herman. I will take you to see



the Niagara Falls. Enzo and Arturo will accompany us.”

“But...?” Indy tried to interrupt.

“There’s no ‘but,’” Norma insisted firmly. “I know what I’m doing, so trust me.”

Amused despite the circumstances, Indy recalled that he had nicknamed the spirited woman the “Pasionaria.” She certainly deserved that nickname!

Somewhat disoriented by the turn of events, Al and Ernesto accepted this deal, thinking they would easily find their prey again.

Then followed a scene that seemed pulled from the movies. With guns in hand, glaring at each other, Indy and Al stepped back. Together, one towards the door leading to the garden, the other towards the main entrance of the house.

“We’ll leave when you’ve started your car,” Norma announced, uncompromising.

“As you wish, my dear,” Ernesto replied, giving her a leering glance. “But we’ll meet again, rest assured!”

“I’m sure we will,” the young woman replied boldly. “Because we have unfinished business, you and I!”

With a smug chuckle, Ernesto turned to his accomplice.

“Come on, Al. Let’s leave this touching little family in peace. Let them enjoy their last hours on this earth.”

“You’re right, Ernesto,” Al agreed, his smirk betraying his young age. “I doubt they’ll see the sun rise again... Ha! Ha! Ha!”

“May you be cursed!” Norma exclaimed, her fury barely contained.

“Goodbye, my dear!” Ernesto replied, leaning in to form a kiss. “Or rather... see you soon. I can’t wait for you to settle the score with me!”

As the two mobsters left, Norma cried out in a fit of rage, “Brute! Villain! I’ll kill him with my own hands! They don’t yet know what the word ‘vengeance’ means to the Calabrians!”

## Chapter 14

### The Harder they fall

“Come on!” ordered Norma once she had made sure that Al and Ernesto had deserted the area. “I’ll take you to the falls.”

“But why are you insisting so much on taking us there?” asked Indy, who still didn’t see what the young girl had in mind.

“First, because there’s a gas pump behind the technical services building. Second, because I know the place like the back of my hand. So, if, as I hope, Al and Ernesto decide to take a look there too, I have a nasty surprise in store for them.” The two guys that work there, Geoff and Darren, are friends of mine.

Deep down, Herman thought, “She’s crazy! We should rather go to the police station! It’s two streets from here! We would tell them the whole story, and they would escort us to the station...”

But he knew that it would be pointless to voice his thoughts aloud. Indy would shut him down with a sharp retort. His friend had eyes only for the beautiful girl with skin that seemed golden in the sunlight. He would never think to contradict her. Love’s deceptive vertigo.

Herman knew Indiana Jones fell in love quickly. He had heard his friend talk about Lizzie Ravnall’s passion. Indy had talked about Norma’s sense of artistic purpose and whole being as a person. Quite a few things seemed to remind Indy of Manuminiag, his Inuit friend in the arctic. Herman often

joked about Indy's apparent interest in revisiting her and Indy's regular pondering of the meaning of an "Eskimo Kiss". Indy loved to bring it up, pretending the reason was to remind Herman that the word "Eskimo" was inaccurate. This was on that theme.

"Wait a minute," pleaded Arturo. "I need to go hide my violin first, in a place where they'll never find it."

"Okay, but I beg you, do it quickly," replied Norma.

Fifteen minutes later, the six fugitives reached Niagara Falls without any trouble. In a deafening roar, one of the wonders of the world offered even the most jaded eyes a truly breathtaking spectacle for the senses! The mist could be felt on any exposed skin. Herman held his mouth open as if to taste the river in the air.

"Always eager to contemplate the wonders of the world... and to engage in a little speech," the professor jumped at the opportunity. "These falls are formed by the Niagara River, which connects Lake Erie and Lake Ontario," explained Henry Jones. "According to some, they appeared thirty-five thousand years ago. But others place their birth seventy-five thousand years ago! Can you imagine?"

All Herman could realize was the unconsciousness of his companions. They were likely to face death, and yet they thought only of marveling at a gigantic shower! Had they all gone mad?

"The course of the Niagara," the professor continued unperturbed, "has a total length of fifty-four kilometers and drops nearly one hundred

meters!”

“Dad, you’re a walking Baedeker guide,” Indy mocked. He took care to keep Al’s submachine gun pointed downwards, held for safety.

“But I think now is not the right time for a history and geography lesson,” Indy added. Henry Jones frowned and adjusted his gold-rimmed glasses. “My word, I’m in a fog,” he remarked with surprise, pulling out a handkerchief from his pocket to wipe the venerable lenses, already covered in droplets.

“Follow me,” Norma commanded as she led them to the gas pump. “We’ll fill a canister and head back home.”

But they were jumping to conclusions. For the moment of confrontation had come again.

“You won’t be going anywhere, my dear,” a familiar voice said. “It’s the end of the road for you... And you, Junior, drop your weapon or I’ll shoot the lovely Italian.”

Struck as if by lightning, Norma spun around and glared at Ernesto. But he held the upper hand, with the submachine gun pointed at them.

Indy complied without hesitation, and Al quickly retrieved his weapon.

“Come on, move over there,” Ernesto ordered. “That’s it, towards the edge of the abyss.”

“I knew she was mad,” Herman silently lamented. “She had no backup plan, and she led us all into this dead end. We’re all going to die! My God, please protect me!”

The raging waters of the Niagara rushed





towards the abyss and sprayed towards the sky like a mountain of foam. One had to shout to be heard.

“Move closer!” Ernesto commanded.

“Still, you miserable wretch,” Norma interjected. “I’ll ask you one question, al. if you answer correctly, we’ll spare your lives.”

“We’re listening,” Indy replied.

“Go on, ask your question, wretch,” Norma added. “While there’s still time.”

And she began to chant some kind of incantation, in a guttural voice.

Through clenched teeth the young mafioso hammered out these few words with undisguised pleasure. “Where is the violin?”

With increasing fervor, Norma continued to chant her strange song.

“We’re all going to die,” Herman despaired. Why on earth did Arturo cling so desperately to that cursed instrument? Everyone would have chipped in to buy him another once they were back in New York! And why wouldn’t this madwoman stop singing? Didn’t she have anything more intelligent to do to save their lives?

Meanwhile, Indy pondered a completely different question: “Why is the Mafia so interested in this violin? That Al and Ernesto want to settle the score with poor Vitelli, that’s logical enough! But why, why on earth are they fixated on this violin?” Indy resolved to engage in dialogue with the two gangsters, both to buy time and to get information out of them.

“Do you know what will happen to you when

the police catch you?" he asked the teenager, towering over him by a good seven inches of height.

"Someone would have to catch me first," the young thug boasted.

"That won't be long. We've informed the police of your presence at Niagara falls. They should be arriving any minute now."

Al and Ernesto exchanged a look of doubt, but mostly panic. Indy seized the opportunity to drive his point home.

"You'll be sentenced to life in prison, Al, on bread and water! at fourteen years old. Quite an interesting fate, don't you think?"

"On bread and water," Herman thought in horror. "That's the worst punishment possible. If Al doesn't crack, then I don't know anything!"

Al was not yet a tough guy. His hair was far lighter than it would be in just a few years and his face was still round. He had not yet gotten his famous scar, he would be unrecognizable in just a few years. It would take him a few years to toughen up.

He was unable to tell if Indy was bluffing or not. Capone had quit school and joined a gang, but he was not a full gangster, yet. Ernesto was equally clueless.

Unnoticeably, Indy had moved closer to the two Mafiosi, even managing to push them back a few steps. They were now only fifty centimeters from the edge. And Norma kept singing. The strains of her melody grew stronger, sometimes even drowning out the roar of the raging waters.

"You won't hear the police car sirens with all



this noise,” Indy warned, never taking his eyes off Al, as if trying to hypnotize him.

“When they arrive, it will be too late.”

And he took another step towards the two Mafiosi. Fascinated, Al seemed to have lost all perspective on the situation. Deafened by the intensity of the tumult boiling at his feet, he appeared incapable of reasoning. Ernesto was not much better. Struck dumb, he watched the scene as if he were a stranger to it.

Both seemed to be under the spell of some curse.

“Take the plunge, Snorky,” Indy suddenly commanded.

“Niagara, Swim. Niagara!” Norma hammered in turn, at the top of her lungs. “Niagara, Swim. Niagara!”

Baffled, Al took another step back, immediately followed by Ernesto.

This backward step proved fatal for them. They slipped on the wet stones, screaming in terror. “HELP! TO THE WATER!”

For a moment, Al seemed as if he might regain his footing, but Ernesto grabbed him by the arm to steady himself... only to drag him down in his fall.

“Niagara, Swim. Niagara!” Norma chanted one last time.

Indy leaned over the void.

The two henchmen of the “Black Hand” had vanished, swept away by the raging torrent.

## Chapter 15

### An unusual hiding spot

As one, Indy, Herman, and Henry Jones stared at Norma, dumbfounded.

“Did you... do that?” Indy questioned, incredulous.

“All I did,” Norma defended herself, “was to sing them an Indian prayer to chase away evil spirits.”

“And God knows they had evil spirits!” muttered Vitelli.

“You’re talking about them in the past tense,” observed the professor. “Are you sure they didn’t survive?”

“Survive?” exclaimed Norma. “It would take a miracle. And the Good Lord doesn’t perform miracles for criminals.”

Perplexed, Indy cast one last glance at the foaming waters. He wondered if he had just witnessed a perfect example of imminent justice, one that follows the natural course of events without external intervention.

Or had he been witness to an assassination carried out with the help of dark forces, manipulated by Norma?

To answer this dilemma, he would have needed to engage in a profound philosophical debate. However, the young boy neither had the time nor the means for it. He would have to wait to interrogate Miss Seymour, his governess, about this thorny issue. For now, action was needed.

“I suggest we fill our gas can and head back to your place, Norma,” he simply said. “And if Arturo allows it, I’d like to examine this famous violin a little closer.”

“Agreed, let’s go. Follow me, everyone.” And Norma set off with a determined step. Covered in tiny droplets, her long brown curls sparkled in the late afternoon sun.

Once back at Norma’s place, everyone regained their composure over a pot of hot tea.

“Indy, I’m okay with you examining my violin,” said Arturo, who spoke without any accent, “but you must promise not to damage it and not to reveal my hiding spot to anyone.”

“Promise, sworn: cross my heart, hope to die, stick a needle in my eye!” replied Indy with the utmost seriousness.

“I don’t wish that for you,” Vitelli intervened. “In hell, you’d find Snorky and Ernesto!”

Already, Arturo was heading towards the kitchen, followed by Norma’s eyes. Not that the young girl feared he would hit a piece of furniture or a wall - he knew the way by heart. But she was very curious to discover where her little cousin had hidden his treasure.

However, she was very surprised when the young boy opened... the trash can to retrieve the precious instrument. “I was sure no one would ever come looking for it here!” he triumphantly announced.

His innocence and happiness were so pleasant to see that everyone burst into laughter...

Except Herman, who had just burned his tongue with his tea.

“Let’s see, let’s see,” murmured Indy as he took the instrument out of its case. “This violin looks perfectly normal to me.”

He began to examine it from every angle, starting by peering inside the case through one of the openings.

“Hmm... nothing suspicious. Let’s check the fingerboard... hmm... the bridge... hmm... the tail-piece... It’s admirable,” he concluded. “This Antonio Stradivarius has certainly earned its reputation.”

Henry Jones raised his left eyebrow, a sign of impending disagreement between father and son.

“I didn’t know you were an expert in violin making, Junior... uh... I mean Indy.”

“Herman and I did a presentation on the violin this year in class,” replied the young boy, still not taking his eyes off the instrument. “So, for example, I noticed that these tuners are much more practical than those on regular violins.”

For once, the professor, usually a fountain of knowledge on all subjects, found nothing to criticize or add to his son’s remarks.

Indy then turned to Herman. “And what do you think of these pegs, Hermie?”

“Nnn... nnn... noooo...”

“nooo,” he replied painfully.

“I beg your pardon? What did you say? Your pegs are swelling? Yet, I haven’t given you any compliments today.”

“Nnn... nnn... nnn...,” protested Herman,

pointing frantically at the tip of his tongue, which had turned white from the heat of the tea. “Nnn... noooo... noooo...” he concluded, dejectedly.

“You’re saying? You burnt yourself? You’re giving up? Oh well, suit yourself!” agreed Indy absentmindedly, then delving back into his meticulous examination of the violin.

“Now, let’s see the bow. The stick looks normal, so does the tip. Hmm, I’ll remove the screw of the frog to check if there’s anything hidden inside.”

“I’d prefer to do it myself,” intervened Arturo, starting to worry about his property.

“But please, go ahead,” replied Indy, handing him the bow.

With the skill of an experienced luthier, Arturo began to unscrew the screw of the frog, which was used to tighten the bow hairs before playing.

“You can look now,” he said, returning the bow to Indy.

“No, I don’t see anything inside. Truly, we’re facing a mystery beyond us. Certainly, this instrument is valuable, very valuable indeed. But something else seems to interest the Mafia.”

“Yes, but what?” asked Arturo.

“That’s the question,” replied Indy, raising an index finger shaped like a question mark. “Anyway, I have a plan.”

“Don’t tell me you want to return the violin to the museum...” pleaded Vitelli, his forehead damp with sweat. “It would be a terrible blow for Arturo.”

Indy shook his head sadly. “Unfortunately, I don’t see any other solution for now. The Mafia

will continue to pursue you as long as you have this cursed instrument. So, it seems more reasonable to return it to its rightful place. Here's what I propose..."

Everyone leaned in towards Indy. They looked like a band of conspirators.

"We'll offer a deal to the Metropolitan curator: if we return the violin to him, he won't have to pay the ransom demanded by the Mafia."

"The ransom?" asked Vitelli, who had never heard of this detail.

"Yes, Mr. Edwards received a phone call from Capone the day before yesterday morning. Our young friend - rest his soul - allegedly demanded ten thousand dollars to return the instrument to the museum."

"Ten thousand dollars? But that's too little!" protested Vitelli.

"Exactly," said Indy. "And that's what tipped me off. A more experienced mafioso than Alfonso would have demanded a much larger sum to make it believable. But we have evidence that the Mafia is interested in the Metropolitan Stradivarius for another reason."

"I understand everything now," lamented Vitelli. "They've been stringing me along from the beginning. They used me to achieve their goals. If I had been captured, or even killed, they would have saved one of their own."

With tears in his eyes, he buried his face in his hands. Immediately, Norma approached him to console him.

“You are avenged, Enzo. They have paid for their infamy with their lives. Justice is served!” declared the passionate Norma emphatically.

Indy waited a moment before continuing with his plan. When Vitelli had dried his tears, he resumed his explanation.

“So, if we return the violin to the museum, Edwards will have to promise us, in exchange, not to pursue Enzo. No matter what the museum curator says!” exclaimed Norma. “The Mafia, on the other hand, will continue to pursue him.”

“I was getting to that,” replied Indy patiently. “Edwards will also need to obtain protection from the New York Police for Enzo and his family. If the mastermind behind the theft, that is, the boss and his Mafia accomplices, are arrested, Enzo will agree to testify against them in court.”

When Indy had finished, everyone had to agree that his plan seemed not only clever but also flawless.

The matter was quickly settled.

Vitelli accepted without much persuasion.

Professor Jones, eager to finally discover his 10th-century manuscript at the Pierpont Morgan Library, was not reluctant to return to New York. As for Al and Ernesto, they lay wherever Niagara Falls had taken them. All was well in the best of worlds.

Especially since in this world, Indy beheld through the eyes of the beautiful Norma...

## Chapter 16

### The Wacky Racers

The return to New York was more comfortable for the professor and for Herman, as the latter took a seat in Norma's Ford Model T, along with Vitelli and Arturo.

It was the day after tomorrow morning when the travelers caught sight of the skyscrapers of Manhattan. Of course Professor Jones "needed" to stop at Cornell University's libraries on the way home, and Indy didn't mind because he heard a rumor that a respectable music school in Ithaca was teaching classes on Jazz. He hoped to catch some live. Just before Ithaca his dad had haggled with Lebanese immigrants for a copy of a gorgeous backgammon game they were selling from a cart. Lebanese people moved to central New York to sell things along the Erie canal.

Leaving Ithaca well before dawn, they made it to New York in the early afternoon. As much as Indy was amazed at things he had seen around the world, he had seen the biggest waterfall at Niagara, the tallest waterfall east of the Mississippi a little outside Ithaca, and now he was among skyscrapers. New York State had its merits. Without even taking the time to go back and change at their hotel Indy and his father went to the Metropolitan Museum.

It had been agreed that Vitelli, Arturo, Herman, and Norma would wait outside. Indeed, according to Indy, the curator would be more easily convinced if Vitelli, the owner of the precious



violin, did not attend the meeting.

“Have you found our Stradivarius?” exclaimed Edwards, with outstretched arms. “Thank God!”

“Yes, and we also return your car in perfect condition,” proclaimed Professor Jones. “I drove with the utmost caution.”

Clearly, he had quickly forgotten about the incident with the cattle truck... Edwards could not have greeted the Messiah better if the latter had returned to Earth for a second coming.

Of course, his joy was tempered by the “deal” proposed by Indy. But he didn’t really have a choice, so he let himself be convinced without too much difficulty.

Meanwhile outside the museum a strange ballet was unfolding before the astonished eyes of Vitelli and his three companions. Several black cars parked one after the other on 5th Avenue, just in front of the entrance to the Metropolitan.

“I’ll go and warn Indy and the professor,” Vitelli immediately suggested.

But Norma wasn’t having any of it. “No. It’s too risky. I’ll go.”

Herman, tucked away in the backseat, observed cautiously. To say he was terrified would be an understatement! Arturo, on the other hand, seemed unperturbed, but he was listening intently.

Norma opened the door of the Ford Model T, got out, looked right, then left, and closed the door. She then began to cross the street. She took a step forward, then another, ready to turn back if the occupants of the black cars made any move to get

out.

Suddenly, Arturo rolled down one of the Ford T's windows and warned the young girl. He had heard a suspicious noise long before anyone else. "Norma, watch out!" he yelled.

At that very moment, another black car came speeding up, heading straight for Norma. The young girl just managed to avoid it. As it passed by, she recognized the occupants of the vehicle and let out a cry of astonishment. At the wheel was Ernesto Carloni, with a malicious smile on his face. And sitting next to him was none other than the young Al Capone!

They had survived their fall into the gorge!

A woman of fiery temperament, Norma Bellin didn't take long to recover her composure. She rushed into the museum, without being bothered by the other mobsters who had observed the scene without reacting.

"Look at those thugs!" Vitelli exclaimed to Herman, who was still huddled in his corner. "They're watching us without moving, like crocodiles ready to pounce on us as soon as we make a move. I don't even understand how they managed to find us..."

It was Arturo who took it upon himself to answer his father.

"If they wanted to attack us, they would have already done so," he observed wisely. "I think they're just waiting for the right moment."

"What do you mean, my son?"

"Well, they must imagine that Indy has already

returned the violin to the curator. What they don't know, because they're too stupid to have guessed it, is that the instrument is in this car. All they have to do is cross the street to retrieve it... What a joke!" Vitelli turned to Arturo, his face pale.

"Do you find that funny, my son? I must say, sometimes I don't understand you!" lamented the Italian. "And I still don't understand how they managed to find us! They knew we would eventually return to New York one way or another," explained Arturo. "So they stationed several vehicles at the entrance to the city, one on each of the roads leading in. When they saw us passing, they just had to follow us. A phone call to their headquarters, and four more cars headed to the museum."

Deep down, Vitelli was rather proud to have fathered such an intelligent son. It seemed he compensated for his disability with exceptional insight for a child his age.

"Don't worry, Dad, everything will be fine. I have total confidence in Indiana Jones."

"Do you really think he'll get us out of this nightmare?" he asked again, hesitantly.

"I'm certain of it."

It was then that Vitelli saw Indy, Professor Jones, and Norma emerge from the museum. Like three rockets, they crossed 5th Avenue without looking back and jumped into the Ford Model T. "Let's go!" ordered Indy to Vitelli, astonished. "I don't know all the roads of New York! I'm not a taxi driver! Drive down 5th Avenue, straight ahead!" indicated the young boy, turning around.

Behind them, the five black cars were started up, soon joined by a sixth car, the one Ernesto was driving.

“Step on the gas, Enzo,” insisted Indy. “We need to shake them off.”

Upon hearing these words, Herman turned yellow. He hadn’t eaten since breakfast three hours ago, and his stomach was churning dangerously under the combined assault of hunger and fear. Fortunately, the Ford T was moving in a straight line. Of course, 5th Avenue wasn’t endless, and they would have to change direction at some point, or they would end up in the water! But for now, they were going straight. It was a blessing because in his state, Herman couldn’t have handled the slightest turn.

“We’re approaching Madison Square,” commented Indy. “Turn left into Broadway!” he ordered Vitelli, who was sweating profusely. The latter veered sharply into the wide avenue that diagonally crosses Manhattan.

Behind them, the black cars were down to three. Indy let out a satisfied smile. “Enzo, you’re a master behind the wheel!” he exclaimed, admiringly. They passed through Greenwich Village, a refuge for Irish and Italian immigrants, before arriving at the intersection of Broadway and Canal Street.

“Turn left, Enzo!” commanded Indy. “We’re going to make these idiots believe we’re heading to Little Italy... Then you’ll take the first right, and then turn left onto Walker Street.”

A muffled complaint was heard from the back

of the vehicle. With his heart in his throat and his cheeks on the verge of explosion, Herman rolled his eyes like an owl.

“Hermie, I forbid you from getting sick in this car, do you hear me?” barked Indy.

That was enough to make poor Herman swallow his pride... and the rest!

“They’re still following us?” groaned Vitelli, who dared not take his eyes off the road.

“I’m afraid so,” admitted Indy. “But there are only two left... Turn right onto Lafayette Street, quickly!”

Without hesitation, Vitelli turned onto the street leading to City Hall, the seat of government of America’s largest metropolis. As Indy had predicted, they managed to shake off yet another pursuer.

Only one black car remained behind them. Inside, Indy recognized Snorky and Ernesto.

Lafayette Street extended into Park Row, which formed an elbow and joined Broadway. When they reached this bustling intersection, Indy ordered Vitelli to turn “hard right,” then to turn left onto Barclay Street.

Unfortunately, he overlooked a crucial detail: an immense building was under construction on this street, causing a massive construction site that blocked the traffic.

Spotting - too late - three immobilized vehicles ahead, Vitelli, with bulging eyes, slammed on the brakes and narrowly avoided a collision. But the same could not be said for Ernesto, who didn’t have time to brake and rammed into Norma’s flashy Ford

T.

“What a fool! I haven’t even finished paying for it!” Under the force of the impact, Herman had hit the front seat, and now held his head moaning:

“Nnn... no... no... I...”

In response, Indy opened the back door, grabbed his friend by the arm, and dragged him toward the construction site.

“You can complain another day, Hermiel! For now, you’re going to do a little climbing. This skyscraper shouldn’t exceed fifty floors! Come on, a little courage!”

## Chapter 17

### A violin on the roof

Once completed, the Woolworth Building would have sixty floors and measure two hundred forty-one meters. It would then become the tallest habitable building in the world. And it just had to be that the chase ended at the foot of this building! Furthermore, on this Sunday, there were no workers on-site. No one could come to the aid of the fugitives.

"I... I... I..." Herman stammered, utterly confused.

"You'd probably prefer to end up under bullets," Capone sneered.

"What does it contain?" asked Indy, bewildered.

"Indeed," confirmed Al. "The case of this Stradivarius contains a metal plate of inestimable value. It's the matrix for a counterfeit ten-dollar bill. From this plate, thousands of counterfeit bills can be produced."

"Counterfeit bills?!" exclaimed Indy, Norma, and the professor in unison.

Al shook his head ruefully.

"I should have known! Everyone thinks only of money today! Money corrupts everything, even art! Consider that they used a Stradivarius to carry out their little scheme! No, truly, I tell you," the professor exclaimed, turning to the vast world spread out below him, "modern civilization is in full decline. The end of the world is near, I can feel it!"



As if the prospect made him dizzy, the professor staggered, and Vitelli had to rush to his aid to prevent him from taking “the big leap.”

“It wasn’t just a little scheme,” corrected Capone. “The Mafia planned to flood the United States with counterfeit bills in hopes of destabilizing the economy and the government.”

“But why did you hide the matrix in the violin case? And why did I have to steal it?” Vitelli asked.

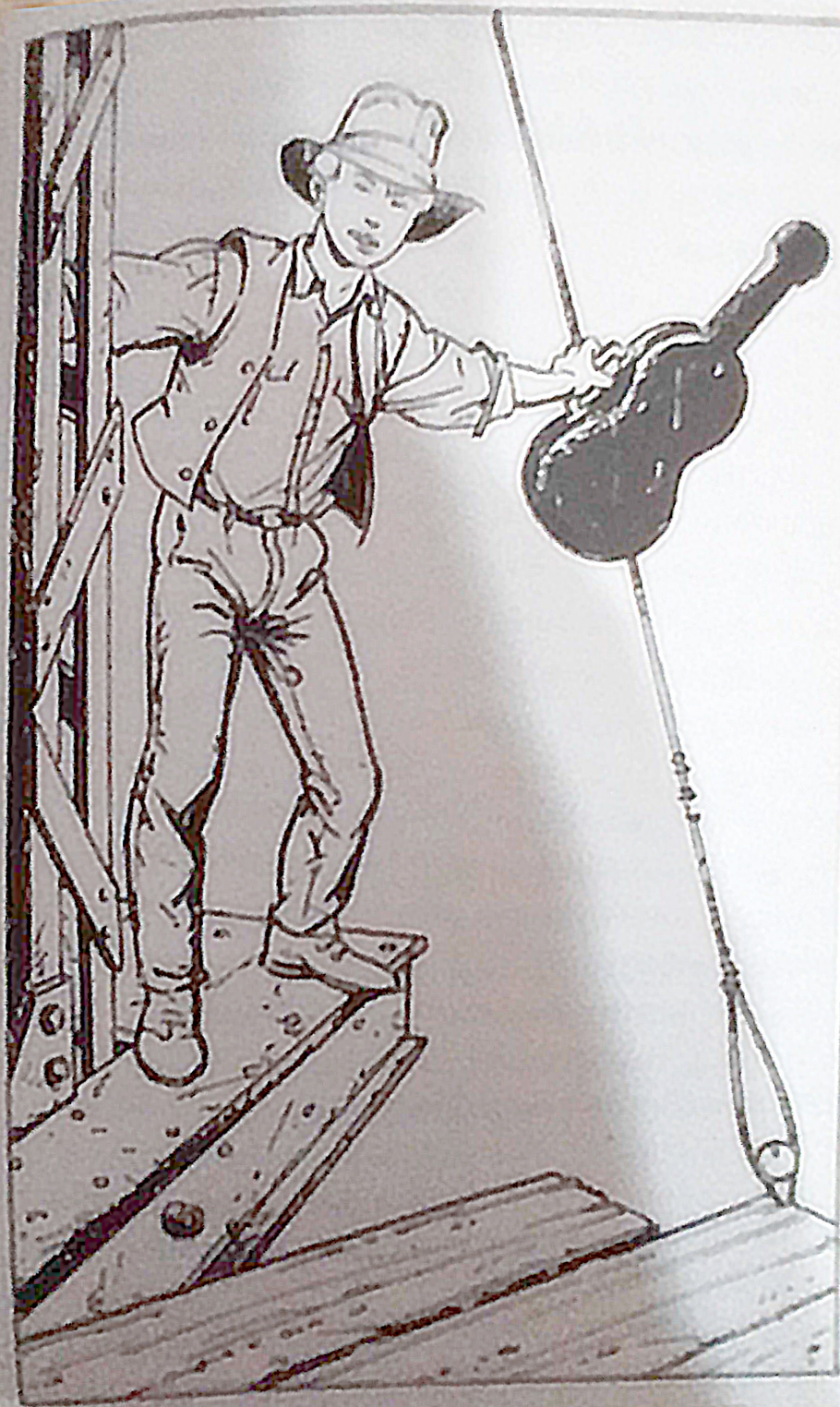
“Because there’s only one man in the world capable of making perfect matrices,” explained the young mobster. “His name is Tullio Giordano, and he works secretly in his workshop in the heart of Sicily. We knew that the Metropolitan Museum was to receive a Stradivarius. That’s why Giordano and his accomplices decided to slip the plate inside the case.”

“I see,” intervened Indy. “No customs officer would think to dismantle a Stradivarius on its way to the Metropolitan Museum of New York! It was the perfect cover.”

“Genius!” commented Herman, who was slowly recovering from his emotions. “And they say music soothes the soul!”

At that moment, police sirens could be heard in the distance. Indeed, they were coming from the base of the Woolworth Building.

The accident, the black cars, and all those strange people storming the skyscraper didn’t go unnoticed! The police had been alerted. The law enforcement officers, quite out of breath, managed to reach the top of the building about half an hour



later.

Unable to retrieve the instrument, Al and Ernesto preferred to surrender. If they had threatened to kill any of Indy's companions, he would have thrown the instrument from the top of the building. And if they had killed Indy himself, he would have plummeted into the void, taking the violin with him. The Mafia would never have forgiven such wastefulness.

Informed of the situation by Indy, the police quickly handcuffed the two gangsters. Strangely, Al and Ernesto didn't seem much affected. A hint of sarcasm even crossed the younger thief's gaze.

"You know, Junior, I've thought about what you said, and I believe you were wrong. With my connections, I won't stay in prison long," boasted Capone. "So, you'll hear from me again," he promised, giving a discreet wink to one of the officers who was cuffing him. To his colleagues, this action conveyed a mocking smile towards Indy.

"I have no doubt about it," replied Indy. Norma opened her mouth to protest, but the young boy signaled her to keep silent. The fight against the corruption eating away at the United States was just beginning, and it would undoubtedly be a long battle.

"Don't say anything, Norma. Your place is with your cousin, and especially with Arturo. He no longer has a mother, don't forget... So, he would be truly unlucky if his cousin ended up behind bars for insulting a law enforcement officer in the line of duty."

The pretty girl instantly swallowed her anger.

“You’re right, Indy. But I will pray for justice to be served.”

“It will be, Norma, don’t doubt it. It will be.”

At the end of this eventful day, Norma, Indy, the professor, Herman, Enzo Vitelli, and his son returned to the Metropolitan, where they were welcomed with all honors by Mr. Edwards.

“My friends, I don’t hesitate to say it loudly and clearly,” trumpeted the curator, “you have behaved like true heroes.”

Then, lowering his tone, he added, “Moreover, I will contact the Mayor of New York so that you will be the recipients of the Municipal Medal of Merit.”

This promise didn’t elicit any enthusiasm from the happy recipients. It even caused a surge of concern in Herman.

“We’ll be recipients of gratitude?” he questioned, rolling his eyes.

“That’s exactly it! You’ve got it all figured out!” confirmed Indy, bursting into laughter, soon followed by his companions... and by the curator, who hadn’t quite grasped the comedic aspect of the situation. When everyone had regained their composure, Edwards turned to Vitelli.

“Monsieur, I understand now that you were pushed to act as you did by forces of evil beyond your control. The Mafia is a social poison, which only art and virtue can combat.”

“A bit of courage is also necessary,” Indy deemed it necessary to add.

“Hmm... indeed,” admitted the curator. “And

courage, Mr. Vitelli, I do not hesitate to affirm, you have shown. Therefore, to show my gratitude, I have decided to organize a charity concert, starring your son. From what I've heard, he has the makings of a great artist. And he will be able to prove it by playing on our dear Stradivarius."

Arturo greeted this news with applause. As for his father, tears welled up in his eyes once again. "And that's not all," the speaker continued. "The proceeds from this concert will go towards funding the operation that, hopefully, will restore sight to our young prodigy."

This time, everyone applauded Mr. Edwards wholeheartedly. Never had he achieved such success...

## Epilogue

To recover from their emotions, Indy, Norma, Herman, and the professor decided to take a gondola ride on Central Park Lake. Indy and Norma settled into the first gondola, while Henry Jones and Herman took the second.

The afternoon heat had given way to a refreshing coolness, and Norma began to hum a few familiar opera tunes. After a few minutes, she fell silent and affectionately wrapped an arm around Indy's waist.

"This lake is much calmer and much... more romantic than Niagara Falls," observed Herman, nudging the professor discreetly, who had dozed off.

"What... huh? What?" Henry Jones responded groggily.

"I said the lake is conducive to matters of the heart," Herman persisted.

Henry Jones then discovered that his son and the beautiful Norma were embracing in the middle of the water.

"Considering he should be back in school tomorrow and I should be studying an ancient manuscript at the Pierpont Morgan Library, it's really... gondola-rious!" Henry Jones quipped.

Indy, who overheard this remark, turned to his father.

"Dad, you behaved like a true hero. In the end, between the two of us, you have the most common sense," he confessed.

Modestly, the professor lowered his eyes. But

deep down, he was quick to acknowledge that he had never received a more beautiful compliment.



## Translator's Notes:

First credit of course to Jèrôme Jacobs for the story and Erik Juszezak for the illustrations.

Indiana Jones is owned by Lucasarts & Disney. This translation was produced as a scholarly exercise. This book that has been out of print for decades and is wholly unavailable in the United States and was never sold in the United States. Please purchase Indiana Jones products from your local retailer!

I use the term “Lore Adjustments” to mean that this translation includes consideration for the wider Indiana Jones story as well as real-world history. For example our protagonist’s dog-namesake ‘Indiana’ is dead in the French version of *L’Ampoule Radioactive* but alive again in *Le Meteorite Sacree* which takes place later.

**This translation simply strategically uses alternative names for Al Capone and Indiana Jones. They never learn each other’s real names.**

Each of the French Indiana Jones books is interesting in its own way. This one is primarily known for having Al Capone in it, and Jones fans will rightly question if this book is canon because it does not seem that Indiana and Al remember each other the next time they meet. Al Capone and Indy have an adventure together in “Mystery of the Blues” which is set about seven years after this one in Chicago.

One thing that should be kept in mind is that these books were intended for young readers. In the

original text of this one Al Capone sticks a gun in Indy's face and then introduces himself, *with his full legal name*. I am translating old Indiana Jones books because I need to read them for a project, but also because I appreciate the character. I want this book to be the best it can be. Al Capone really used and preferred the alias "Snorky." Today's young reader is a little more savvy than those of the past, having Al Capone give his whole name felt fake and patronizing. There is precedent in the wider Indiana Jones stories for their adventures generating names. Even at that time people criminals knew not to give their full names, in the original French text Capone even *gives his full name in a ransom call*. So I edited the text to use his alias and his actual gang affiliation instead of his legal name where appropriate.

Obviously the Niagara Falls adventure is too big to count Jones and Capone not remembering each other seven years later. As mentioned, in the original French text Al tells Indy his full name *immediately* and Indy basically does the same when they meet. In this translation Indy introduces himself as Henry and Al Capone uses an alias. If you carefully look at the text, Al Capone never hears anyone call Indiana Jones anything but "Henry" or "Junior." Indiana Jones never hears anyone call Al Capone anything but "Snorky".

The "not remembering each other" issue has been solved as in the English Translation the two fourteen year olds never learn each other's names. That has been checked throughout. Why would Al Capone in Chicago think "Indiana Jones" was the

same guy who was with him at Niagara Falls? That guy was named “Henry” to him. Why would Indiana think Al Capone was the same guy he messed with back then? That guy was named “Snorky” and Indy has had many adventures in between. Sorry nit-pickers.

This book doubles down on the idea that the opening of *The Last Crusade* is in July. That was addressed in this translation.

The Mayor of New York in the original text was not based on the actual mayor of New York at the time of the book’s setting. The fact that the actual Mayor of New York survived being shot in the neck just months before he is in this book was more interesting than the Mayor in the original French text who is a broad stereotype not resembling the actual Mayor in any way. I’d also like to point out that this book has to be early in the month, as the Mayor left on a ship late in the month and died on the voyage.

The other change was some context to the chapter titled “Cover That Breast!” My guess is that when the French Authors were asked to write these books one thing that told them was to make fun of the home culture in some way. The Sacred Meteorite has a passage that if I left alone would say Inuits eat lice, I flipped that one to them testing if Indy was gullible to think they would eat lice. I re-titled “L’Ampoule Radioactive” to “Dr. Curie’s Lost Vial” and in that one French Cuisine is mocked with malodorous cheeses and tripe. In America our prudishness for nudity was an easy target in this book.

The issue in the original French text is that

Dr. Jones simply flips out about the painting. Little context is given. Indy has seen quite a bit beforehand that make this seem strange, so added detail about the painting was included with more exposition from Dr. Jones.

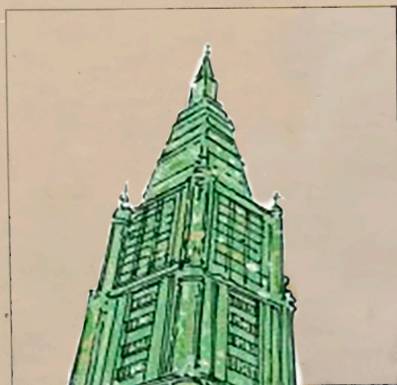
You are able to read this due to the efforts of the Reddit user “QualityAutism” and I am very thankful for their efforts. Lastly I would like to give credit to Junior Jones of Indymag.org for taking the first stab at this book. Fans like him keep the character and his world alive.

# **YOUNG INDIANA JONES™ and THE METROPOLITAN VIOLIN**

Story & Original French Text: Jèrôme Jacobs

Illustration: Erik Juszezak

English Translation with Lore Adjustments: Dr. Edd Schneider

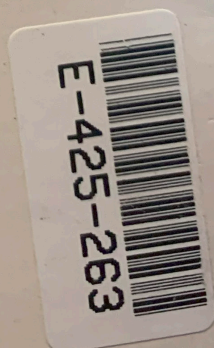


A 14 year old Indiana Jones races  
across New York State to save a  
Stradavarius from the hands of the  
mob with his father and best pal  
Herman in tow. Machine Gun action  
greet's Indy's every move!



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